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WATER COLOUR PAINTING

ALFRED W. RICH

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WATER COLOUR PAINTING

BY

ALFRED W. RICH

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With 67 Illustrations

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TO MY FRIENDS & HELPERS

FROM many of my friends I have received much help in writing this book. What I had to talk about was familiar enough, but the method of telling my story was quite another matter, and in this I was constantly helped by Mrs. Rich, whose valuable assistance as well as that of my friend Mr. G. L. Behrend I want to record very gratefully. To the kind friends who allowed me the privilege of reproducing their works, and thereby adding a rare attraction, I have to thank Mr. Henry Tonks, Mr. P. Wilson Steer, Mr. James Pryde, Mr. D. Y. Cameron, R.A., Mr. A. A. McEvoy and Mr. David Muirhead. To those who have with great kindness unhung my pictures from their walls and lent them for the purpose of illustrating my book, I tender my heartiest thanks—Miss Helen R. Lock, Mr. A. B. Clifton, and Miss Tatlock who allowed her splendid picture of Conisboro' Castle, by Peter de Wint, to be included. I wish also to convey my appreciation of their politeness and help to the authorities at the Victoria & Albert Museum. And lastly, a very kind word of thanks is due to Mr. F. Stanley Service for the patience he has shown in dealing with a somewhat exacting author.

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WATER COLOUR PAINTING

CHAPTER I

PAPER, BOARD, EASEL

IN writing a book on water-colour painting, which shall be of practical use in every way to the Art student, it is necessary to start with the simple elements. This plan is adopted in order to enable not only the most elementary, but even the more advanced student to begin at the beginning. A review of well-trodden ground may afford interest, and be in some way helpful.

It is a matter of great importance that the paper on which painting is done should be well considered, in order that as few difficulties as possible may arise. The word difficulty is used here as the result of much experience, as pitfalls and mortification meet one at every turn when the paper takes the colour washes in an eccentric way. More will be said later on, and examples given showing the bewildering manner in which certain papers behave. All these difficulties, however, vanish as more experience is gained, but in the earliest efforts it is absolutely necessary that a paper be used which shall present as few peculiarities as possible. And here it may be said, that without any doubt the student in his early water-colour work must use a pure white paper with a moderately smooth surface. Among the many excellent water-colour papers which are to be had at the present time, few are better for the beginner than Whatman, or Arnold, which should be of one of the lighter makes, and not rough. It is more satisfactory, however, for the student to make his own choice, but always within this limitation: that the paper must be white, moderately smooth, and capable of taking a wash easily, and this any artist colourman will be able to supply. The list of

papers given at the end of this chapter is arranged in order of difficulty, No. 1 being suitable for the beginner, and so on in sequence.

I will now consider the reason why certain paper should in the earlier stages of study be avoided by the student. Tinted papers are bad because they give an appearance of quality to work which otherwise would have nothing to recommend it. Such papers are also likely to induce the use of body colour, which cannot be too severely condemned. The matter of body colour will be duly considered later on. Michallet is another white paper which is admirable for water-colour painting, but owing to its want of substance, in case there is any washing out to be done, this paper is apt to be disappointing for the beginner. For advanced students, David Cox paper is beautiful in its substance, although difficult to work, as the washes when first applied have a different appearance from that which they assume when dry. Moreover, this paper is very difficult to wash, so that the perfection of effects in its use is obtained only when the work is quite direct and no lifting of colour is necessary.

Very absorbent papers should be avoided until a complete mastery of technique has been acquired, and the surface, or substance of the medium worked on has ceased to afford any real difficulty to the painter. As the student advances in knowledge and experience the particular paper used becomes a matter of individual taste, and then endless indeed are the varieties from which to choose.

Before leaving the subject, it may be as well to point out that many of the pure white papers, being very finely prepared and dressed in order to get the brilliant whiteness, are rendered more or less difficult to work on owing to this process of manufacture. In order, however, to make such papers quite workable, it is only necessary to give them a good bath in cold water, when most of the offending material will be removed. With these few remarks of what are considered the best papers to be used in the early days of working in water-colours, and those which should be avoided, the student is left to learn by inquiry and experience which quality, tone, and surface are best suited to his requirements.

Method of preparing the Paper for Use

Having considered the kinds of paper best suited to the requirements of the water-colour student, it is now necessary to explain the manner in which paper should be prepared for use. Of the many ways in which this can be done there is, in my opinion, no method so practical and effective as straining the paper on a board. This is done by taking a sheet of paper, some two to two and a half inches larger than the drawing board, damping it well, and then pinning with drawing pins the overlapping paper to the back of the board, pulling and straining firmly yet gently as the paper is fastened. Having given it time to dry, the student will obtain an even surface, which will not cockle as the painting proceeds. David Cox and others of the early school of water-colour painters used paper strained on a frame, so that wet cloths could be introduced at the back of it, thus preserving a continually damp surface as their work proceeded. This process has been much vaunted as perfect, but reference is made to it here in order that it may be severely condemned. It is not a damp paper which the student requires to paint on, but an absolutely dry surface. More will be said on this point when the technique of our work is being considered.

Another article which should be avoided if possible is the "drawing block," which is apt to get very bubbly as a drawing progresses, and very often the later leaves become loose and useless. Very convenient no doubt they are, but the good student should not study mere convenience, but rather take any trouble to possess himself of a good reliable surface of paper upon which to work with comfort and ease. In selecting a drawing board, it should be well made but not thick, as any extra weight of materials when working from Nature should be carefully avoided. Drawing pins should always be of good quality and not too large.

The Easel

The consideration of this article in the kit of a water-colour painter will need but few words, as I have never found any use for it in my experience and, for reasons which I will proceed to explain, do not recommend its use under any circumstance. Although this chapter is dealing simply with the necessary materials for the student, some reasons must here be given why

such a traditional article as the easel is set aside as of no use to him. The truest way for the drawing-board to be placed when it is in use for water-colour purposes is slightly slanting, and to ensure this position nothing is better than to let it rest on one's knees.

It may be contended that this is very irksome and tiring, and so it is; but when the reason for this position has been explained, the advantages will appear so great that much self-denial must be faced in order to ensure obtaining them. If an easel is fixed with a board on it and a water-colour painting is commenced, it will become at once apparent that all the washes of colour from a full brush begin to run down the surface of the paper and to gather in pools of colour at the lower part of the work, or so far down as the run of the colour lasts. At the same time, the spot where the colour was intended to remain is denuded of material, and so appears thin and entirely lacking in the substance which gives so much charm to a water-colour painting.

It is also impossible when working at an easel in this medium to get a sufficiently firm line, which is again an indispensable quality. The use also of a light water-colour easel in a high wind is most uncomfortable, and should, incidentally, be a reason against its use. On the other hand, the position its use gives to the artist in the eyes of the general public is rather interesting. Some years ago I was working in Sussex and excited the interest of a very talkative little girl, who as she became more familiar became also critical. After some talk, she observed that I was not a real artist like Mr.——, who also was working in that part of the county. I very readily disclaimed the honour, but on inquiring the reason I found that it was the fact of my not using an easel which so completely put me out of court.

Having explained the reason why an easel is not suited to water-colour work, it is necessary to point out to the student an alternative method possessing greater advantages. One fairly good plan is to have a small canvas frame on four legs, upon which the artist can rest his drawing board, and thus work with great ease and comfort. In this plan the legs of the stand nearest to the worker should be shorter than the others, thus giving the necessary slant to the board. The one serious drawback to this arrangement is the lack of power which a more or less unsteady rest gives to the worker when leaning on or over it.

The simple plan which I have followed for many years is, to rest the drawing board on my knees. This position gives great

power, and although irksome and tiring, it will prove the most satisfactory in the end, and give the best results. This method allows the board to be placed in any position that is required, and ensures the greatest amount of firmness in case of high winds. It should be pointed out that a very firm and good-sized camp stool is an absolute necessity; nothing has given me greater surprise than to see the flimsy stools which most students and amateurs use when painting from nature. In dealing with this question of the method to be followed when working in the open, I have given my own experience, hoping that it may be useful to the reader. It should, however, be borne in mind that the individual must decide the most advantageous method to be followed in his particular case, so that should a motor-car be found to afford the maximum of comfort, then a motor-car should be used, and no doubt the best work will result.

The student, however, must always remember that a thing worth accomplishing is ever accompanied by hard work, so should any plan appear good it ought not to be put on one side because it is irksome or difficult.

List of Papers best adapted for Water-colour Painting

Those I have used myself: Thin Whatman, Allenjè, Michallet, David Cox, Creswick, Varley, Cartridge, Van Gelder, White Canson, Burlington.

CHAPTER II

THE COLOUR-BOX, AND MATERIALS GENERALLY

THE subject of materials for the use of the student is a most interesting one upon which alone an experienced worker might with ease write a book. But for want of space it must be confined to the narrow limits of one chapter. None but the chief points will therefore be considered, and these of a thoroughly practical nature.

The contents of the colour-box are of paramount importance, but before considering the actual colours which should be included it will be of interest to discuss the type of the material—whether it should be the hard cake as used by the early masters, or the modern moist colour. I think every student should work with cake colours for a time, as well as with the moist colours, and then decide for himself which appeals to him as a medium. There is much to be said in favour of the cake colours, as they can be kept much cleaner and quite free from dust. On the other hand, the moist colours have many points in their favour, the foremost being the ever-ready condition for use, which is in itself a very great recommendation. In working from nature it is no mean advantage to have colours ready to hand to jot down fleeting effects. When desiring some colours for immediate use for such registration the cakes leave much to be desired, and must give way at once to the moist. There are, however, many cases in which the older system of colours can be utilized, such as flower-painting, and all kinds of still life and studio work. This question must therefore remain one for individual taste, although at the same time it is strongly urged that the dry cake should be tried, before it is entirely put on one side in favour of the more modern medium.

There has been much diversity of opinion as to the colours which should furnish the box with which the young student may make his first venture in painting landscapes from nature. After

much practical experience, it is very strongly advised that these five colours are most reliable for beginners: light red, yellow ochre, cyanine-blue, ivory-black, and burnt sienna. We will take these colours one by one and point out their qualities and rare beauty. Light red is a permanent colour, very brilliant, easy to work, and lending itself readily to association with others. Thus, with the blue in this list, and the yellow, it makes a series of most beautiful greys, suitable for cloud shadows, or those on buildings or roads. Used purely, it is ready to take its part in buildings, cattle, or the drapery of foreground figures. If mixed with cyanine-blue alone, it produces a quiet purple which can safely be put into the hands of a beginner without any fear of that distressing mauve colour invading the whole work, which is so painfully evident in the landscape of the amateur.

Yellow ochre is, if possible, even more highly prized for its beauty and other qualities than light red. With but little help from more brilliant yellows it can be depended upon to supply all that is necessary in the landscape, where yellow is required. Quite permanent, it is also a most charming colour to use, and is capable of a most beautiful variety of expression when it is used, from a limpid wash of subtle paleness to its deepest tone. Beautiful in the warmth of evening light, it is equally responsive and effective when used to form part of the colour green, whether for foliage, fields, or foreground herbage.

Cyanine-blue, our third colour in this list, is quite equal in beauty to either of its companions, and is undoubtedly quite necessary. It is the best of this class of blue for durability, and as at present manufactured should be found to stand the test of time. Whilst writing of this colour it is as well to warn the student against the use of colours somewhat similar, viz. prussian and antwerp blues, the former being very unreliable. For the clear blue of skies, distant hills, and as a partner in green, it is of the greatest value. It is also of importance when greys are under consideration. In common with the two preceding colours it is delightful to work, and also has a most beautiful range of expression, when used from its lightest to its strongest tone.

Ivory-black, our fourth colour, is of far more use, and of greater value in the colour-box than it is generally credited with. In striving to get a true estimate of the qualities of this pigment, the student should sit down quietly with a sheet of white paper and patiently try to obtain the greatest variety of tones possible,

from the most limpid transparent wash to a spot of jetty black. After such an exercise, the other four colours now under discussion can be taken one by one and dealt with in conjunction with ivory-black, when it will become evident how immensely useful as well as beautiful it is. When used purely, it makes the most delightful and transparent shadows for clouds, buildings, or in general shadow masses over a landscape. Taken together with other colours, it makes soft or rich neutral greens, browns, or greys, varying from cold to warm, as we allow blue or red to predominate in our mixing.

The question of the range and possibilities of a single colour suggests to me a very good and useful exercise, from the practice of which I have gained much experience as to the vast amount of variety there is in what conventionally is looked upon as a single colour. The more I am familiar with a colour, the greater amount of work it will do for me in producing those effects for which I strive. In these single-colour drawings it will be obvious to all that ivory-black has the greatest power, and that yellow ochre has the least: and yet even with the yellow there is a surprising amount that it can do in the way of expression. In striving to get a knowledge by this means of each separate colour, I find that it will make the student very careful to avoid the scrubbing and washing out method, as such a process only tends to kill the brilliancy of a colour, which being once used should never again be disturbed.

A word of caution must be given in the case of ivory-black, for with careless handling it may become dense and opaque, especially when applied over and over again on the same spot. It's great beauty is obtained when a wash, whether of the very faintest or of the strongest, is applied to the paper, and allowed to dry in without being again touched or disturbed.

We now come to the last of our five colours, and certainly its beauty very clearly shows, that in this list there is no first or last in order of merit, as they are all of such great excellence that the student only has seriously to make himself acquainted with their qualities to appreciate them all equally. Having thus striven to show the beauties of this our elementary colour list, and to explain how necessary for the student it is to become used to each one gradually, we will proceed to add colour by colour until the list is quite complete and made up as the writer would suggest.

The next, and sixth, colour to be added to our list must not be

thought to possess any particular superiority over its fellows now coming into our palette, but simply is one of an additional five which are equally beautiful. Our new friend is transparent green oxide of chromium, which for great brilliancy and charm of working cannot easily be surpassed. Its great use is in foreground herbage and foliage, where it should be used with a most sparing hand, and here and there, where spots of scintillation are required, quite purely. It can also be used, by admixture with other colours, in making neutral greens in endless variety, and also serves a very useful purpose in the creation of greys. In this use the student must take care, as reds have a way of seeking to part company when associated with this colour, and therefore the component parts should be very well mixed and the wash used quickly.

In further adding to our list, there is, or should be, no more welcome companion to our already very select family than raw sienna, which possesses every quality to merit such a distinction. Admirable in the ease with which it can be applied, sympathetic when associated with other colours, possessing a rare beauty when used in a pure state, it is in every way worthy the affectionate regard of the painter, and well calculated to assist him in the creation of masterpieces.

A strong blue will now be a very welcome addition to our list, and in seeking for such a colour we cannot do better than include new blue or french ultramarine; this latter is used in lieu of pure ultramarine, which of course would be the blue selected were it not for its costliness, a full pan being priced as high as 21s. As a blue for skies it is only of use as the zenith is approached, and the full depth of the firmament is apparent. In tree masses, middle distance, and the making of greys, this is a charming and most sympathetic colour, and fully justifies its claim to the regard of the painter. As we are admitting to our company colours of a more brilliant hue, a bright yellow certainly has a claim to our consideration; aureolin is therefore allowed, for it is a very beautiful pigment, clean and easy in its working as well as being a great help when greens are calling for component elements. I have used this colour for many years, and have always found it very useful in supplying a good bright yellow when required. It is as well not to use it with either carmine or crimson-lake, these colours not being satisfactory when combined owing to chemical action.

It is necessary to warn the student against the use of this colour in any but a sparing way, as its effect if used freely is far too startling and aggressive.

Another bright and useful colour, which will form the last of our second list of five, is rose-madder; it is in every sense a good addition to our box. Most beautiful in the making of silvery greys, and aiding in the warm tones of sunset-time, it is nevertheless a very dangerous colour in the hands of the inexperienced student, as it is likely to help in producing the depressing purple-pink colour so often pervading the work of the amateur. With this word of warning it will be found helpful.

Beyond this very complete list of colours, which should be found sufficient for all practical purposes, come a few which are given as an extra source of supply. These added colours are all beautiful in themselves, and are well known by experience to me. They should, however, be for the use of those only who have become masters of their art. They shall be taken as they come to hand, so I begin with naples yellow, which is a beautiful pale tone, rather opaque, and perfectly permanent. For use in sunny landscapes and building masses no better colour can be found; and it is very admirable and effective in sunlit foliage.

Another colour, with a strong yellow nature in it, is brown-pink, which is most useful in the painting of trees and foreground masses of herbage. This colour is a great favourite of mine, as it has a strong character of its own, which cannot possibly be obtained from a mixture of other colours. Emerald-green may be used sparingly in a pure state, but it is not advisable to mix it with other colours. Indian red is another useful colour when used alone, in light washes, but is dense in substance, and unsafe when associated with blues. Brown and purple-madder are useful and very beautiful, and can be included in our list, which has already reached a range which, after many years of experience, the writer has found amply sufficient for all practical purposes. There are, of course, numerous others of great beauty and admirable quality which it has not been found necessary to mention. These must be left to the individual student, who will find by experience the pigments best suited to his taste, and capable of expressing most fully his feelings as a painter.

Reference must again be made to the great advantage there is in adhering firmly to a limited palette, especially for the young student, as affording the greatest security against painting in the

florid and unnatural manner which has been so much followed since the scheme of colour adopted by the early water-colour masters was departed from.

Coming to another part of the colour-box which must be considered, we now advise the student on the subject of brushes. These should be of the best quality obtainable, in round, not flat ferrules. Attention is drawn to this latter point, as it is remarkable what a number of students provide themselves with flat-ferruled brushes instead of round. I have always used red sable brushes, but whether red or black is a matter of no moment and can be left to individual taste. For all ordinary purposes, when working from nature, three brushes are amply sufficient, as no drawing is likely to be beyond half imperial size, viz. 16 in. × 20 in. The sizes of brushes recommended for this purpose are Nos. 4, 8 and 12. It is very necessary that brushes should be kept perfectly clean, being well rinsed and dried after use. This attention will keep them springy, and prevent the annoyance arising from colour left in the brush from previous use mixing with the pigment on the palette. A question often asked by the student is, which is the best means of keeping the colours in good condition for work in dry, hot weather. There is no doubt that the surest way of effecting this is to keep the box in constant use. Failing this, if a piece of damp sponge is kept in the corner of the paint-box, all will be well. There are but few other requirements for the equipment of the water-colour painter. The list will be complete when a sponge, linen rags, dipper for water, pencil, and india-rubber have been added.

List of Colours

Primary list: cyanine-blue, yellow ochre, light red, ivory-black, burnt sienna.

Additional list: french ultramarine, green oxide of chromium (transparent), emerald-green, naples yellow, raw sienna, rose-madder, brown-madder, indian red, vermilion.

CHAPTER III

DRAWING

ALTHOUGH this book is intended to treat of the subject of water-colour painting only, it is scarcely possible to pass by the subject of drawing without making some reference to it. Drawing has rightly been called the foundation upon which all pictorial Art is built, and without it the most charming sense of colour becomes a more or less meaningless expression. Drawing is the element in Art which proclaims its presence, in a picture, at once to the critical eye, and it is only to such judgment that work should be submitted. When the young student begins working from nature, the very first check he experiences is caused by his lack of drawing, of which he at once becomes conscious. It is not within the scope of a work of this kind to offer advice as to the relative merits of the various great schools where drawing is taught. Rather the attempt will be made to give such advice that the student can follow a safe and progressive path, which will enable the eye to see more correctly.

Before we begin to go into details on this subject, it would be as well to make a few remarks on the general disinclination to the study of drawing which exists amongst amateurs and young students. It is the usual thing for a student requiring lessons in water-colour painting to set aside all desire to receive instruction in drawing, "as he has probably attended a School of Art for perhaps a year." Now to put on one side so important a matter in such a way as this is ludicrous in its ignorance, and yet such an error is very prevalent, and should be corrected.

Drawing must be the constant study and consideration of the artist, however long his career may be, and the whole time a source of infinite joy. To put it in a few words, drawing is the Art which enables one to reproduce the appearance of a solid object on a flat surface. Now such being the case, it is evident that the most elementary student should begin his study of drawing by

working from a solid object, and under no consideration should copies be made from flat drawings. I have taught many young people, and invariably the first lesson has been given from some familiar object. The child who begins to study drawing in this way has taken the first step properly, and as more difficult objects are drawn, the preliminary stage is being dealt with which would lead a student to an antique cast, and, finally, to the living figure. Now it may be that these words are being read by a student who has followed such a course, and who is desirous of learning something about water-colour painting. For such a student this chapter is not intended, it is for those who are more or less in the elementary stage. As far as the student still in the early stages of drawing is concerned, it is as well to assure him that in studying from familiar objects he is doing what all the great artists of the past have done before him.

The greatest help when making a study is to provide oneself with a subject which offers the greatest possible interest to the student. As these remarks are particularly intended for those who are taking up the study of landscape painting from nature in water-colours, it is proposed, as far as possible, to make the instruction on drawing practically apply to this branch of Art. With this end in view, it is strongly advised that wherever the student is painting from nature he should have with him a drawing-book of fair size in which to make notes and studies of any object which may strike him as being particularly interesting, or as presenting some difficulty of construction. In this way all the familiar objects of nature pass under review and are subjected to a keen scrutiny.

Details thus become well known, and through this knowledge forcibly expressed in one's work. This pleasant labour should be pursued with untiring effort, as no amount of effective painting can hide shortcomings in drawing; and, on the other hand, good drawing gives interest to a picture even where other technical qualities are lacking. A notebook in which to record drawings should be the constant companion of the student, and such small efforts will not only afford much pleasure, but gradually strengthen his capacity in this direction. Much attention should also be devoted to the study of notebook work by the great men of the past, notably that of Constable, whose drawings and notes, exhibited in Room 99 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, should be constantly studied.

A very favourite plan of mine is to make highly detailed drawings in pen and ink or colour outline, and then to tint in the local colours in light washes, thus making a veritable water-colour drawing. For such studies it is best to select as a subject buildings, shipping, or other compositions where the greatest amount of detail is to be obtained and where a maximum of difficulty is present. It is impossible to impress too strongly the necessity for the constant study of drawing, as it is only by continual hard work in this direction that success can possibly be obtained.

I give a familiar illustration of the importance attached to the constant study of drawing by a great artist: A story is told of the late Professor Legros, who being asked to recommend an antique cast for the study of a student, suggested the large torso by Michael Angelo. To this advice the student replied that he had drawn it three times already. "And what if you have," said the Professor. "I have done it over forty times, and hope to do it many more." The student should always bear in mind that the study of one particular kind of drawing helps with every class of subject. Thus the work done in a life school enables one to meet the difficulties experienced when drawing a tree, or a barge.

I was a student for many years at the Slade School, where I spent only one week in the Antique Room, the remainder of my time being passed in the Life Room. The years thus spent in drawing from life were with the object of qualifying for the difficulties to be met with in painting landscapes in water-colours from nature; for this particular class of work it was always my ambition to pursue. On the other hand, it very frequently happens that the best students from the life are those who in their previous studies have only drawn from inanimate objects, but who have by such work arrived at great perfection. The great quality to be aimed at is that of taking infinite pains which, once attained, should lead to success.

As has been remarked before, this book is on water-colour painting, and the question of drawing is only dealt with in order to make it clear to the student how important the subject is, and that it should always be looked upon in such a light. In subsequent chapters this question of drawing will be constantly emphasized and the works of the great men of the past referred to. Among all the artists whose work will be reproduced here there is no instance of one who has not evidenced by his paintings

his devotion to drawing. To look upon this study as one of an irksome nature is entirely a modern idea, as all tends to show that the giants in the field of Art regarded it as the most fascinating means of expressing their ideas.

CHAPTER IV

STILL LIFE

I HAVE found great and constant objection made by students when I have recommended the study of still life objects as a preliminary to working from nature in water-colours. This aversion to what should be looked upon as a thing indispensable in the life work of an artist is chiefly due to one cause.

For more than fifty years there have been produced in the various Schools of Art thousands of water-colour paintings of still life subjects. The study of such groups, which have, as far as I have seen, been well arranged, has, however, entirely lacked interest owing to the method by which they have been produced. The utter dullness of such drawings, which have found their way into the homes of Great Britain in vast numbers, has had a direful effect on public taste. The fault rests entirely on the method and not in the matter, and the students who object to still life work have confused the two.

The manner of painting a group of the kind which is generally objected to is this. A subject being set, the student proceeds to outline it in pencil, which being duly corrected by the master or mistress, again and again, is finally passed as in a proper condition to be painted. The next process, that of colouring, is a still more laborious task, which after endless criticisms and much washing-out and many alterations is pronounced finished. Of course, the student is astonished at having produced so fine a work, and in due course friends and relatives are equally impressed.

Now of a certainty the thing is a deadly dull effort, lacking every quality which goes to make it even a thing of small art merit, but equally sure it is that only the hand of the student executed the drawing, and that the brain power, if any, which lives in the production was supplied by the master or mistress. Such a process as this was certain to cause, sooner or later, a revolt

against the system. This has come, and "still life" is hated accordingly.

Now having attempted to explain why the modern student has such a justifiable objection to painting from still life, I find it a very pleasant task to talk about the better way of doing this class of work. I hope before I leave the subject to have converted the reader to look upon this delightful and interesting study with my own eyes, and to feel some of my joy when pursuing it.

The student should always bear in mind that his latest study should be a clear statement of the extent and limit of his Art knowledge, so much and no more. If, however, a drawing done under the direction of a master, and full of his knowledge, is passed as the work of the student, then much misapprehension is likely to arise in the mind of such a student, and of others also. The early drawings should be done in line only, without any thought of the question of light and shade, which shall be dealt with as more difficult studies come under notice. In this elementary stage great numbers of drawings should be done, and in each case the most concentrated effort made of which the student is capable. No progress can be hoped for unless great pains are taken, and if possible each drawing should be corrected by the best artist whose opinion can be got. When proficiency has been achieved in drawing objects in outline only, it is the best plan to seek to get an effect of construction by putting in a shadow of one value only.

In making studies of objects such as these, the greatest care should be taken to preserve the shape of the shadow with accuracy. It is also most important to paint the shadow in one wash, the effect of this method being to get an appearance of great strength into the drawing. In order to keep up a keen interest in this kind of study the student is advised to make a collection of any objects which strike him as possessing qualities of shape or colour likely to make interesting groups. I myself, during the time that I was giving particular attention to this class of work, made a very large collection of objects of great variety at a very small cost. Glass, china, metal-work, odd pieces of old wood-carving, ancient and modern armour and arms of every description, and a thousand and one other objects suitable to draw and paint.

It may appear strange to the student that so much importance is placed on the study we are considering as a preliminary to painting from nature. It must be borne in mind, however, that

before proceeding to deal with the great difficulties which will be found to confront one when working in the open, it is necessary to be as perfect as possible in the technical knowledge of the medium. I have attempted to explain this method in the chapter dealing with the question of how to use water-colours. In order to gain this knowledge, I have found no better way than great devotion to the study of still life. It is very charming to sit quietly in front of an interesting group of objects, and, at leisure, study their lines and colour and values. It is this struggling with difficulties which gives the importance to still life work, and makes it of great value to the artist.

At no time should it be looked upon as a thing of small moment, as many of the greatest painters have done the most enchanting pictures of inanimate objects at the best period of their work.

The studies which Vandyke made of arms and armour are neither more nor less than still life ; this being so, how much encouragement is given the student to follow in the steps of such a master, and attempt great things. There are many advantages which are to be found in this class of work, but amongst them few are greater than the ease with which we can place a few objects on a table and immediately begin a study which may very conceivably become a work of great beauty, and ensure fame for the doer. In order to demonstrate in a practical manner some of the many advantages which I have derived from having devoted much time to this study, I now give my personal experience. As an instance, when beginning a painting where the interest of the foreground is centred in a building, a knowledge of drawing and mastery of detail is absolutely necessary. Likewise, in working on a composition where shipping comes in and occupies a prominent position, a similar experience is essential, as the details, unless made with accuracy, become tame and commonplace.

Another very important point is that the simple joy of working is infinitely enhanced when the painter feels himself capable of mastering difficulties which appear to the inexperienced eye nothing but a confused mass of details. Nothing has given me greater satisfaction in my work than thus to unravel great apparent confusion in the task selected, and gradually to reduce it to an orderly expression. All such delight can be promised to the student who will school himself to the necessary toil, which consists of an infinity of pains and patience. As a reward for such efforts, the happy result is sure to follow. Very wonderful is it to see the halo

of beauty which surrounds an otherwise commonplace object, when translated by a great draughtsman; and let it always be borne in mind that the continued study of masterly drawings is a necessary part of an artist's work, in order to keep alive his enthusiasm. I have found it a good plan carefully to keep all studies, numbering and dating them, and then at the end of twelve months review the series and note what progress has been made. By this means, if the work has been zealously pursued, the student should observe a distinct advancement in his knowledge, and feel a corresponding sense of satisfaction, and encouragement to make yet greater efforts.

CHAPTER V

METHOD OF USING WATER-COLOURS

IN considering the method of using water-colours, I will attempt to make it clear that the mode or system which I practise and advocate has been pursued without any interruption since the time when the great masters of this Art painted. As a first and general principle it is laid down that directness in working and in producing effects should be the aim of the water-colour artist. This rule should guide the young student as well as the master of his Art. I will show in a series of drawings, arranged in order of difficulty, the practical meaning of the foregoing words.

These illustrations are in no way intended to be looked upon as even the parts of pictures, but are here shown to demonstrate the manner in which our medium should be applied to paper. At first this may seem to the student a very simple thing, but the more he gives his attention to the subject, the more evident will it become to him that this is the principle upon which my contention exists. To begin with a very simple illustration, drawing what is here meant as a direct method. The Tower in our plate (Illus. II) is seen with one side in shadow, which is made very obvious, in order to demonstrate the point clearly. The wash of colour forming this shadow was put on at once with a full brush, and the paper resting quite flat it dried in as a blot does, and drying thus it produced a transparent effect. When colour is applied to paper in this manner and is allowed to dry in, it is referred to as having a bloom. Now, on the other hand, if the shadow we are considering had been produced by several washes, and some sponging out (in order to get the right tone) and washing in again, there would have been no transparent atmosphere, and no bloom, but instead an opaque colour, lacking all vitality, but possessing in its place every evidence of labour and pains. This question of the manner of putting on colour will be referred to again, for on it hangs the whole difference between the early water-

colour painters, together with their followers, and the men who worked in this medium during the greater part of the nineteenth century. This simple method of putting on colour in full washes and then allowing it to dry in undisturbed, is the first great point which the student should master. Therefore these very simple examples are given to impress and emphasize the point.

It must always be borne in mind that the method is the same whether the silvery shadow on a bright white cloud claims our attention, or the dense shadow on a mass of middle distance foliage—always the same full mass of colour applied from a well-filled brush and then allowed to dry in as a blot. Take a large brush filled to overflowing, and then on your paper flick as big a blot as you can, and without disturbing it let it dry. Look at this spot of colour now, full, transparent, and with a rich bloom on it. It is the fetish of the water-colour method of work, and its greatest beauty.

The student can see paintings of this peculiarly British Art in most of the great Galleries, public and private, in Great Britain and America. Of course there are many such treasure-houses from which instruction and inspiration can be gathered; and be it remembered also, that this scheme of applying water-colour in a "blot" was not peculiar to the mode of working by the old water-colour master, but has been followed since the art began. Not only did Thomas Girtin, John Sell Cotman and Peter de Wint recognize it as the means for getting atmosphere and fullness of colour, but from their time to the present such men as Bonington, Müller, David Cox, Callow, Thomas Collier, Melville, and now P. W. Steer, H. Tonks, and other modern artists adhere to it. My intention is to try and take the student with me along the road which I myself have followed.

In the earlier stages the student should make his drawing carefully in pencil until, having satisfied himself that it is correct, he can proceed with the colouring. The more or less elementary student is now my care, so our first study shall be a very elementary one, although it is hoped that the more advanced workman will find some interest in it, as well as the beginner. To accomplish this study only the first five colours are used, in order that as little trouble and anxiety as possible may arise to confuse the student.

This study has been selected as a very simple composition, in line, values, and detail. It is one, however, which can be found

ILLUSTRATION II

A Sussex Church Tower

A full description of this drawing is given in Chapter V.

ILLUSTRATION III

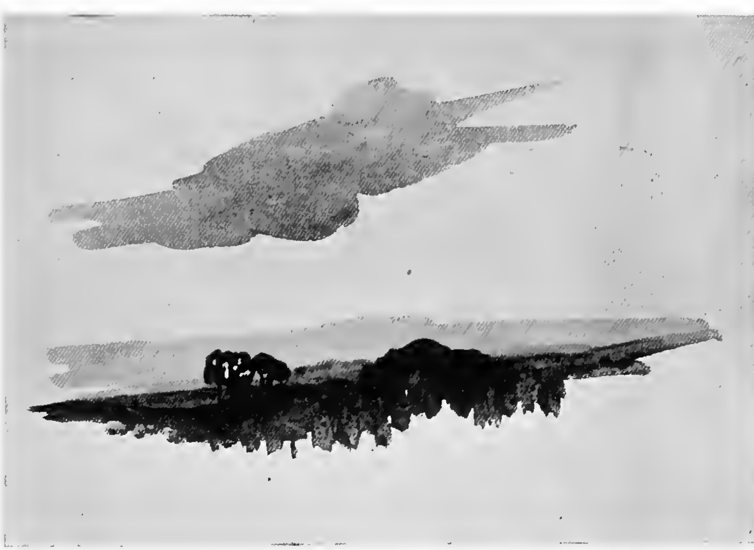
The Effect of a Heavy Cloud over a Woodland

A full description of this drawing is given in Chapter V.



Illus. II

A SUSSEX CHURCH TOWER



Illus. III

THE EFFECT OF A HEAVY CLOUD OVER A WOODLAND

ready to hand throughout the length and breadth of England, for the beginner to try his hand at, when putting in practice this first simple truth of the well-tried method I advocate. Many a like drawing I have made, and many more I hope to wrestle with, in my attempt to add to my knowledge of painting from nature in water-colours. In these first words of advice it is as well to point out that no attempt should be made to begin a water-colour by tinting the paper, or getting what is called quality into the work by washing over the whole tones which may be entirely hidden by subsequent laying on of colour. It must not be thought, however, that a mass of local colour is never to be added to in parts.

In the drawing of the Bridge (Illus. IV), the shadow on it to the left was added when the local colour was quite dry. This point will serve to show how a deeper tone can be added, but such an addition should never entirely cover the local mass. The early efforts of the student when painting from nature should always be an attempt to express as far as possible the view he has selected as simply as he can. This aim is, however, almost entirely neglected, and it appears rather to be the student's object to make his efforts resemble the work of some favourite master. Needless to say that such a way to begin to study from nature is leading to nothing but sore disappointment, and sooner or later the giving up of the task undertaken. The task is a hard one, beset with endless difficulties at best, but if commenced on a sound basis it will lead to a knowledge of the subject proportionate to the ability of the student.

One of the earliest stumbling-blocks which will be encountered is a mass of colour in touch with another of a different tone, as when a tree comes in front of a building or another tree of a different colour. In such a case I have always found that the best way is to allow a thin line of the dry paper to remain between the wet colours in juxtaposition. When all is dry, the dividing line of white can be filled in with either colour.

This illustration will show very distinctly what is here meant. Of course, this plan need only be adopted when there is a likelihood of the colours running together. This plan of piecing together a drawing from nature should be found very helpful to the student, and is one which I have often put in practice.

I have frequently been asked by pupils to tell them how I begin to paint a picture. To this question there is, according to my

ILLUSTRATION IV

Drawing of a Bridge

IN this drawing the shadow to the left was added when the local colour was quite dry; thus a deeper tone can be added, but such an addition should never entirely cover the whole mass.

ILLUSTRATION V

A Common and Inn

THE whole scheme of this drawing was the quiet neutral sky of a grey day, the cold blue of the strip of distance and warmer tone of the foreground Common with the white road and pond. To these were added the Inn, cottages and trees which gave a centre of interest. Here the five colours were still the only ones used.



Illus. IV

A Bridge



Illus. V

A Common and Inn

belief, only one answer: on dry paper, without any first wash or such mechanical process. But from that point, how to go on is a very different matter. However, there must be a beginning somewhere; and as I write with the object of attempting to help the water-colour student, a start shall be made.

Now the plan herewith advocated is equally addressed to the youngest beginner, as to those who have travelled far on the road. Begin by drawing or painting the most interesting object, or part of the subject you have chosen for your study or picture.



Illus. VI. Commencing a Painting in Water-Colours

Now here a picture is started. The beauty of the line of castle buildings, the bright mass of brilliant white cloud, and the crowd of trees in the middle foreground, all tend to make up a picture satisfactory in line, colour, and value composition. These parts were to me the living soul of the thing, and being so, were registered as rapidly as possible, but without hurry. And not only without hurry, but rather with every atom of attention and concentration of which I was capable. Before the sunlight had passed from cloud or castle, and before the shadow had left the tree group, the spine of the work was completed, and all else to be done was patiently to go on with the details of secondary importance, and to seek by them still further to increase the interest of the heart of the work.

Now it is in doing these middle and later parts of our picture

ILLUSTRATION VII

Piecing together Colours

WHEN one mass of colour comes in touch with another of different tone, so that there is a danger of them running into one another, the best plan is to allow a thin line of dry paper to remain between the two until both are dry and fill in the intervening space with either colour.

ILLUSTRATION VIII

A Break in the Clouds

(*See page* 59)

THE drawing here given shows a mass of sunlit clouds, and in the foreground a group of cattle, with a bank and piece of road of high value. The group of cattle and bank are the complement to the cloud; the dark trees to the left are complementary to the dark tree and herbage to the right. Complement means balance, or a repeating of one part of the picture in a lesser degree in another part. If the light foreground were placed immediately under the cloud mass it would have looked unsightly, and such a composition would be bad.



Illus. VII

Piecing together Colours



Illus. VIII

A Break in the Clouds (See p. 59)

that success or failure may step in; therefore it becomes absolutely necessary that the effort to achieve should be sustained until the last brushful of colour has been used, and the artist leaves his work to the judgment of others. Words seem inadequate to express an emotion, and as every pictorial effort is directed towards this object the words must be assumed to have done their best.

In selecting this subject, a really difficult and complex composition has been considered, and one which the most experienced might well stumble over. Yet all that has been written in reference to it is the same, only enlarged and elaborated, as would be said if a very simple study were being discussed. The drawing which shall be considered now is one of great simplicity, and suited to the beginner. (See page 40.)

Landscapes of this simple type are scattered broadcast over England and other countries, and are everywhere ready to the hand of the student. The course of everyone in Art must be one of progression, from simple to great things, and joy should be felt in each stage, although necessarily the greater achievement will afford the greater satisfaction.

A very familiar difficulty which constantly is met with arises when a large surface has to be covered, with varying colour, such as a mass of woodland, a heath or common; or yet again, a shadowed wall of different materials. In such cases, as the colour alters fresh additions should be made to the brush, and so the parti-coloured appearance be given to the object painted. When, however, a very violent change occurs, then the rule of leaving a narrow line of paper between the tones should be followed.

Another difficulty, which often happens, is when a mass of colour is obviously too dark in tone. In such a case, see that the offending part is quite dry, and then put with the brush some clean water on it, and briskly rub with a dry clean rag. Do not put on too much water. If deftly done this gives a very charming effect. When a very clear shadow passes over a part of the drawing in hand, the student should take note of its limits; and then on the completion of the work, when all the local colours are set and dry, it can be run in, and if done with care and judgment the result should be a transparent veil such as Nature herself uses. It must not be thought from these remarks that a series of tricks is going to be divulged, as none exist in this lovely art. The success or failure of this cloud shadow will clearly show the student

if he has grasped the question of the " blot." To epitomize, the method I suggest and believe in and practise, is untiring devotion to drawing, a constant study of Nature and all her moods, and then an emotional effort to register such phases in a direct manner, without relying in the least on any set rule of thumb, or mechanical aid.

Now having drawn attention to the method which I believe in as the only one capable of giving to water-colours their greatest beauty, it is necessary to mention those means to which I object and against which I want to warn the student.

It is necessary, in order to trace the rise of the laboured and more or less mechanical manner of painting in water-colours, to go back nearly a hundred years. To fix anything like an exact date for this transition is impossible, as the change took more than a generation. To account for this gradual decadence seems very difficult, unless we take into consideration the great social changes which were then taking place. The French Revolution had come and gone, Europe was preparing for her long rest after a hundred years of war, and a series of extraordinary inventions had begun, which were destined to replace the aristocracy of the land by a ruling class, owing its creation to trade and manufacture.

The old nobility had been for generations almost the sole patrons of Art, and they had dispensed their patronage with rare ability and taste. The new order had to be educated in taste and culture; but in the interim the Arts suffered, and that severely. As the new kind of buyer increased, it became evident that more so-called " finish " was looked for in works of art as a species of guarantee that much time and labour had been expended on their production. Unfortunately this demand on the part of the public met with a ready response, and even amongst artists of the greatest distinction the effect could be seen in their works. A new term now came into vogue, and " Exhibition works " was the term commonly applied to the completely finished and laboriously over-detailed efforts which began to cover the walls of the great Galleries. We now also hear of the emotional and spontaneous drawings (water-colour) being styled " sketches "; which term was intended to convey the meaning that it was a slight thing and of not much account. Now of all the terms in common use there is not one which conveys such a false impression as does this one. Doubtless it is intended to mean that the effort referred to is something less than a complete thing.

ILLUSTRATION IX

Peter de Wint

1782–1842

BRAY-ON-THE-THAMES
FROM THE TOWING PATH

National Gallery

ILLUSTRATION IX

Bray-on-the-Thames

THE examples of the work of Peter de Wint that I have selected are all from his finest pictures, and are painted in his best style. I have often looked at certain works by him with much disappointment, owing to their being too full of finish and detail. In the four drawings, however, that are included in this book the genius of this painter is shown to perfection. All is the spontaneous art of a great master. These four drawings charmed me as a young student, and now after many years I come to them again and again, and each time I find fresh beauties to inspire me and awaken my admiration. The picture here reproduced of Bray-on-the-Thames that is sometimes referred to as the sketch or study for the finished work is very fine indeed, and lacks nothing in either detail or finish to make it so. The larger picture which was based on this sketch, on the other hand, is crowded with an over-careful elaboration that robs it of soul; the very quality that is so evident in the smaller and less finished drawing. The student must not think that I decry the manner in which de Wint has drawn and painted the eel-pots, herbage, and barges, for I certainly do not, as they are all very beautifully done. The point that I wish to impress is that the original sketch is a fine emotional work of art, and the larger and more highly finished picture is spoilt by over-elaboration. Yet one more word about these two drawings. I fully believe that de Wint did the finished one in order to gratify a rich and ignorant buyer, and that in his innermost mind he knew which was the real achievement, and which posterity would give him credit for.



Illus. IX

Bray-on-the-Thames, from the Towing Path, by Peter de Wint

Every genuine effort in Art is complete. It is the expression of an emotion, and being such is finished. As an instance of what is here meant, let two water-colour drawings by Peter de Wint in the Victoria and Albert Museum be cited. They are both of Bray-on-the-Thames. The smaller is a direct emotional work of the highest quality and rare beauty, and the other and larger one a laboured effort upon which much time and thought have been spent, overdone with detail, and very evidently an " Exhibition work." Let the student carefully study the two, and soon he will be convinced that the so-called sketch is the living work of art, and the other is—well, it is something much less, and convinces not at all. These remarks, which may seem rather beside our subject, will, if the student carefully considers them, appear of really great importance. It is as necessary to draw attention to that which should be avoided, as to point out the method which is advised.

Bearing directly on this subject, I must here make a short reference to the place in Art occupied by Turner. This greatest of all landscape painters has been to the student of water-colour work a cause of stumbling and disaster. This may sound a harsh statement, but a little explanation will make the assertion evident.

Should the learner confine himself to the study of the " Middle Period " of this great master all would be well, but very unfortunately many have not done so. His paintings and water-colour drawings, including those in sepia for the " Liber Studiorum," show the pure and direct method here recommended to admiration, and these the writer is never weary of going to for inspiration and help. It has been the fashion, however, for the student to take as his models of style and method those later poetical efforts of Turner which were only possible after his former periods had been traversed. This has been the cause of much disaster individually, and to water-colour painting generally during the later middle of the nineteenth century. The attempt to copy the water-colours executed by Turner during his later years has only resulted in utter failure, the best that has been achieved being a miserable imitation.

The student must begin his work from the beginning, at first using the simple means to express his thoughts and emotions, and then as his knowledge develops he may become free from all restraint, and afterwards as the master of his art, his work must stand alone to justify or otherwise the means he has used.

Before this subject is left, another great master must be mentioned whose entire range of work should be studied with great care, and this master is John Sell Cotman, whose work became towards the later middle of his life over-laboured, comparatively heavy, and of a quality far inferior to that which distinguished him so brilliantly during his earlier life. He appears to have recognized his fault, as the work of his later years again had the limpid beauty of wash and charming simplicity for which it is so highly distinguished. I was as a young student much confused and exercised when looking at this master's work. From no painter have I learned more, but fortunately I questioned the period of Cotman here referred to. The reader will see that I am giving my experiences very fully, hoping by it to encourage and stimulate inquiry and effort, and it is on this account this separate chapter on water-colour method has been written. It must be quite understood, however, that I shall seek throughout this book to keep the question now being considered ever present, as it is, in my opinion, the subject which should be the keynote of a technical work of this kind. It may be of further help and interest to discuss a little those men from the earliest to the present day whose work has afforded me the greatest help in study of method. All these men will be again mentioned later on with others, but here they are cited as affording admirable examples, in whose paintings can be more or less easily traced the method of their working.

Thomas Girtin should be studied closely whenever an occasion arises of seeing his work, and with him should be linked as equally worthy J. S. Cotman and Peter de Wint. Each of these men afford in their paintings the greatest help to the student in his effort to acquire purity of method and style. As we break into the early part of the nineteenth century, no men have so great a claim on our consideration as Richard Parkes Bonington and William Müller. Their method and manner are ever fresh and full of profound interest, and their work should become familiar to all those who are studying, or who take a delight in water-colour painting.

Later on there is Callow, who, although not of the first order, very admirably carried on the pure system and traditions of his art. To finish our list of those men who are here given as particular helps to the student, mention must be made of Thomas Collier and Henry Tonks, the former of whom worked during

ILLUSTRATION X

John Sell Cotman

1782–1842

OLD DRAINING WINDMILL

ILLUSTRATION X

Old Draining Windmill

FINELY drawn, and drawn with his usual firm and masterly hand, the Old Draining Windmill of John S. Cotman is an admirable picture to study. In the plate the black of the Mill is rendered in rather an inky manner, but this need only be pointed out in order to make it clear that the original drawing has no such fault. Cotman often gets his blacks very black, but there is always atmosphere in his darks which eliminates all inkiness. The precision and constructive excellence of the manner and the drawing are very beautiful, especially in the planked part of the building of the lower part of the Mill, as well as the head of it. The light of the figure is complemented by the break in the sky to the left hand, and also in the white piece of the Mill head that stretches out at the back of it. Always reserved in the use of colour, when Cotman does use it, the effect is telling to a degree, all his spots of black, red, and white being introduced with a fine result. None of our old painters knew better than Cotman how to work the major portion of his pictures in delightful neutral tones, and then with masterly touch introduce his bright spots of white, black, or red. The feeling that Cotman showed in his work is profoundly refined, and his line is also extremely delicate, although very firm. It is a curious fact that Cotman's face was full of a delicate refinement, and his character was most kind and gentle. Very little good fortune cheered him, and he had the mortification of seeing far less able men succeed in the race of life, while his lot, after a most laborious career, was to die comparatively early of what, for a better name, can only be called a broken heart.



Illus. X *By permission of Mr. Palser*

OLD DRAINING WINDMILL, BY J. S. COTMAN

the late middle Victorian time, while the latter is working with us now. Whenever opportunities can be found of seeing the works of Mr. Tonks, advantage should be taken of them, as there can be no better lessons taken than by studying the emotional beauties of this master's work.

The productions of the men here mentioned as affording particular help to the student are the common possession of most of the public galleries of Great Britain, and can be seen by all who seek their aid. I have frequently, as an aid to myself, after looking at the drawing of any particular master, made a study in its style. Such a course fixes the work on the mind permanently, and being so, is a pleasing possession, wherewith to refresh oneself at leisure. Do not let any one shudder at this suggestion, and recoil with horror at what they may fear will introduce into their "style" that of another man.

Let all rest quite assured, that if they do as I have always advised and am always advising—constantly work direct from Nature, they need fear no such pitfall. And after all said and done, a student has no style to lose, although my pupils have constantly referred to the existence of such a thing. "Style" is the very last quality a painter assumes, if ever, and then if he eventually does possess this great distinction he is quite free from the taint of plagiarism. Everyone is told now and again that they are seeking to imitate someone else, and where all are tarred with the same brush the affront is easily endured. Critics are very fond of saying such a thing, but it is useless paying attention to much that is said in this way; the close and constant study of Nature will make all end well, and to the credit of the painter.

ILLUSTRATION XI

FLORENCE

THIS illustration of Florence, by Professor Henry Tonks, is introduced in order to give an additional pleasure to those who study the works of past and present masters of British water-colour painting. I can only express my admiration for the work that this great artist has accomplished. He was for several years my master at the Slade School. I hope that all those who love the purely English medium of water-colour will lose no opportunity of making themselves, as far as they possibly can, acquainted with those of Henry Tonks, to whom I would take this opportunity of acknowledging the great help and encouragement that he has always given me.



Illus. XI

FLORENCE, BY HENRY TONKS

CHAPTER VI

COMPOSITION IN LANDSCAPE

THE question of composition is the most important matter connected with the painting of a picture. Herein rests the making or marring of the work. Small mistakes occur in most pictures, so that seldom do we see that which can be correctly described as a grand arrangement of line, values and colour. To lay down a law by which the artist could be unerringly guided would be impossible. The thing is recognized, but not so the road which has led to the achievement. Hobbema, in his picture of Middleharnis, went in opposition to all preconceived ideas which should rule a good composition, and yet he gave to the world one of its greatest treasures.

A quiet satisfaction should be the effect produced when looking at a picture. To obtain this result the work must be good in composition, or the effect on the trained eye will be otherwise. Now the only way the student can get a correct knowledge of this most important part of his work is to look only at those pictures which a concensus of critical opinion has placed in the category of good compositions.

As a practical suggestion it is advised, and was for years a plan of mine, to have with me when pursuing my studies from nature, a small book in which could be noted just such landscape arrangements as struck me as being of particular interest. In this simple way I have made hundreds of such studies of every conceivable subject: buildings, timber masses, roads, farm buildings, rivers, shipping, in fact all and everything which I met with in my converse with nature. These studies need not be in any way elaborated, but just noted down sufficiently to refresh the memory. Such notes should be dated, and then from time to time referred to in order to see if the mind is getting more critical by such labour. It is also a good plan for the student to make from these rough outdoor drawings in sepia or indian ink, others not over-

finished but carried just sufficiently far to let the lines, general masses of the pictures, and values express themselves.

By general masses is meant the principal parts of the work, such as distant hills, lights and shadows of clouds, tree masses, rivers, and foreground. No labour must be shunned, as Art demands from those who follow her a very whole-hearted service. It often happens that in seeking for subjects which will increase and strengthen the knowledge of composition there is very little time in which to seize a passing effect. Thus a heavy mass of clouds may cause a very strongly shadowed foreground, with the middle distance in bright light: such a scheme is often very fine.

A rapidly passing effect of this nature has to be registered almost in a breath. Yet if the shape of the cloud mass, the lit-up space and the dark foreground are noted, enough will have been obtained to enable the making of a more finished drawing at leisure. It is wise to make the study from such a note as this in the studio, and as soon after the effect has been seen as possible, as such impressions rapidly fade from the memory. Compositions of the greatest quality can either be of a simple nature or of great complexity. The former kind are where the principal parts of the picture are few, as in the "Mousehold Heath," at the National Gallery, by Crome; or, again, the wonderful painting by Canaletto of "A Stonemason's Yard" in the same collection.

The great men of the past appear to have aimed at the concentrating of interest on one central point in their works, and then letting the subsidiary parts lead up to such a centre. This plan, however, is not without exceptions, as, for instance, in the "Transfiguration" by Raphael, where two distinct schemes of composition exist on one canvas, and yet, it is unnecessary to say, the whole thing appears right.

Do not let it be thought that this reference to figure paintings is in any way unhelpful to the student of water-colour landscape, as the same principles should be evident in all pictorial art. The greater number of the Dutch landscape painters base their compositions on a very low skyline, for in their flat country it would be a scheme which would be ever present to them in their walks abroad.

In referring to this school, it must be remembered that it is upon the Dutch masters the British school is based, and should, even now, in spite of all the modern ideas, be one of the chief sources of inspiration. Constable and de Wint were both great

students of the Dutch masters, and through Constable, who much influenced them, the Fontainebleau-Barbizon school.

Digressions, if they bear on the point at issue, can be forgiven ; so after this little one, the practical suggestions, which it is the great aim of the writer to give, can be resumed.

A very important part in the making of a correctly balanced picture (composition) is played by the silhouette. No doubt most students know a lot about this question of silhouette, so those who do can skip this page, and leave the point to be discussed between my less advanced readers and myself.

In walking down the narrow street of some charming old town, it does not matter where, at home or abroad—such a one is sure to rise in the mind at call—it will have been noticed that there are two things which principally affect the mind. The street in question may be entirely in shadow, or shade may only cover one side of it, whether or not is immaterial. Now where the shadowed side traces its line of irregular buildings against the lit-up sky, it is silhouetted ; and, again, if there is a light side to our street, the sunlit buildings show white against the blue sky, and this side is also silhouetted in a reverse way, light versus dark.

This question of silhouette must not be thought only to apply when the hard outlines of buildings are painted. Equally beautiful are the effects when a mass of shadowed trees oppose their dark outline to a background of sunny down land, or a brown and purple heath rises sombre against the last brightness of a summer sunset. No man appreciated more fully, and certainly none registered in his work more wonderfully and beautifully his appreciation of the silhouette than did John Sell Cotman. To take two typical examples, let " Greta Bridge " and " The Shadowed Stream " be looked at.

Without the pure water-colour method this beautiful effect could not have been obtained. No washing out or laboured technique could have accomplished the miracle, but with the direct and transparent blot, the emotion of the painter is convincingly expressed. This may all appear very difficult to the young student, and yet the writer has often shown its application when giving a lesson to quite a beginner. Let a bridge be taken, for example, where the shadow under an arch opposes the light beyond. In such a case the principle is seen in its entirety, and the subject is of the simplest.

Again, the shadowed side of a tower is against a light cloud.

ILLUSTRATION XII

Distant View of Lincoln

THIS is one of the many distant views of Lincoln that can be seen for miles round the city. Flat as the country is, there is yet much variety, as the River Witham is constantly to be seen winding very quietly through the Fens. The pumping mills are also in great variety, and lend much interest to the foregrounds. In a flat land like Lincolnshire, there is always present a vast expanse of sky, which in itself is sufficient to give the student plenty of material wherewith to construct a picture. Very beautifully the hill on which the cathedral rests rises on the skyline and forms a point of great charm. I was particularly fortunate when making this painting in the sky effects. It was very noticeable how little movement there was in the clouds. This I remember quite well, and drew the attention of one of my pupils to the fact. The series of cloud shadows that draw across the sky from the centre up to the right-hand top were just sufficient to account for the shadowed foreground. Note should be taken of the value given to the composition by the broken fence. The student when painting from nature should be constantly alive to the value of apparently small things, as very often they may prove useful, and in some instances absolutely essential to the success of the picture. Note how vacant the foreground would here look were it not for the part played by this fence. The buildings to the left are those of one of the many pumping stations to which I have referred. I used french ultramarine freely in the greys in the sky, as I find that on a sunny day in summer the greys in the fleecy clouds are made well with this colour as a foundation. Had cyanine blue been used, the greys would have lost the necessary warmth apparent on a hot day.



Illus. XII

DISTANT VIEW OF LINCOLN

As in drawing so in composition, the artist has ever to remain a student, and be ever adding to his store of knowledge in this direction.

As a help in this very important part of painting from nature, I made in my young days a collection of engravings after the works of the Dutch and French schools. These very charming engravings can be bought for a trifle at any old print shop, and afford great help to the beginner. The period when such works were engraved began in the middle of the seventeenth century and continued during the whole of the eighteenth. The works of nearly all the great masters of the Dutch school, and many of the French, were thus reproduced. Great assistance can be got from such a study, and if a small collection is handy for reference, it will be found most helpful. I used to make it a practice, before setting out for a work tour in the country, to go through my collection. You might do worse than follow this example.

The student will often find when studying from nature a view which strongly appeals to him, but where the foreground is entirely void of interest. Now this is a case where he must try and put in practice all he knows, to overcome this blank and lacking part of what would otherwise make an interesting picture. Something must be introduced to put the absent vitality and life into the composition, but how ? Suppose the vacant part which mars the landscape consists of a quite tenantless meadow, with interesting groups of trees, buildings and low-lying hills beyond. The meadow is the difficulty, which must be filled with interest or the drawing will be a failure. A group of cattle, a few sheep, or a horse and cart will lend themselves admirably to brighten the picture and to give the necessary foreground interest. Now it is very easy to advise the placing of such a group as suggested, in order to put backbone into the work, but the query naturally arises as to where such a spot should find its home. Continual practice will enable the painter to place with unerring accuracy the different interests of his work, but how is the young student of landscape work to proceed ? Again I must bring in my own experience, and by it I hope to solve the difficulty. In such a case it has been found the best plan roughly to suggest on a page of our study book the group in various parts of the field, and then to decide in what position it looks most at home.

It is said of Corot, that when he was painting from nature the different groups of figures or animals which intruded themselves

into the landscape he was considering were all painted in roughly, and painted out until he was satisfied that he had hit on the arrangement most suited to his picture. Of course, in the case of a water-colour drawing, such indications of groups should be made in pencil, when the superfluous ones can be very easily erased. I have often tried this plan and found it a very successful expedient, as well as a most interesting exercise.

Another great difficulty which will confront the beginner, and which will continue during the whole time he paints from nature, is the question of a cloudy sky. With bewildering haste, one beautiful arrangement of clouds succeeds the other, until the mind is in despair with the difficulty. However, the problem has to be faced with a great determination to solve it. Here are a few suggestions which may be helpful in the task. Rapidity in execution is essential when a cloudy sky is being painted from nature in water-colours. This being the case, the student must fortify himself to put up with the mortification of repeated failures, as such has been the experience of all who have gone before him. I have generally found that when working from nature on a cloudy day the best plan is to deal with the sky first, while the interest and energy are as yet at their best. All the rest of the work may come on more leisurely when once the sky has been dealt with.

Now as a general rule there is one part of the sky which is full of the lit-up portion of the clouds, so to this part the first attention should be paid, seeking to register the salient part of the cloud group. From the consideration of this central portion the less prominent parts can be done at greater leisure. The whole scheme, when painting a sky, is to eliminate the greater part of the passing clouds, and to take into the picture only those which are needed to produce the general effect of the composition. The young student will very soon become quite alive to the absolute necessity of making endless studies of clouds, in black and white, pencil, chalk, or charcoal.

One very good plan is to indicate the shape of the cloud group chosen for consideration in pencil, and then stump in the shadows with the finger or thumb. Excellent effects are thus got, and the time spent should be so small that quickly passing effects can be easily registered. If the student when making water-colour studies adheres to the approved method, he will soon begin to appreciate the beautiful transparent shadows he can get by it.

On the other hand, it will become ever more clear to him that atmosphere is entirely lost if sponging out and scrubbing are resorted to.

Should the young student in his early days when working from nature find the question of sky too puzzling and difficult, then let him for a time put it aside, and do his studies without skies. In this case it should be clearly shown that the sky is appreciated, and a proper proportion of paper left. Here is shown a drawing in which no sky was attempted, only the correct size of paper was apportioned to it. Too great advantage should not be taken of such a concession as this, as sooner or later this most important part of the landscape has to be dealt with. Nevertheless, it is better for the beginner to leave the sky entirely alone than to land himself in disheartening difficulties (see p. 60).

Very often quite small flocks of clouds can be seen in the north-east, lit up by the evening sun. Such a cloud scheme is a very interesting one, and affords a healthy and not too difficult task for those unaccustomed to such work. Unremitting effort should be accorded to sky painting, as the beauty of the landscape much depends on the way this part of a composition is handled.

The term "complement" in painting is one which should be understood by the student, and which I will attempt now to make clear. It is a point interesting to consider, and its application in a landscape has much to do with the making of a picture. The difficulty of explaining to a student by means of a drawing illustrating the point is great, although to an artist the term is a homely one.

The drawing given opposite page 42 shows a mass of sunlit clouds, and in the foreground a group of cattle, with a bank and piece of road of high value. Now in this instance the group of cattle and bank are the complement to the cloud. And again, the dark trees to the left are also complementary to the dark tree and herbage to the right of the picture. In other words, complement means balance, or a repeating of one part of the picture in a lesser degree in another part. Again, the faculty of correctly composing a subject comes into play, as if the light foreground were placed immediately under the cloud mass it would have looked unsightly, and such a composition would be bad.

The constant study of the work of great masters combined with drawings made from nature will quicken the sense of proportion, and this word is only one more way of expressing the subject now

ILLUSTRATION XIII

A Drawing in which the Sky is indicated only by Use of a Low-toned Paper

IN this drawing I have left the untouched low-toned paper entirely alone, and made it do duty for a sky. It is introduced amongst the illustrations to show that a satisfactory drawing can be made without any labour put into the sky. Great care must, however, be taken to paint the distance faintly, otherwise the illusion respecting the sky cannot be maintained. In such a drawing, patches at least of the paper should be left untouched in the lit-up foreground. The spirit of this picture lives in the bright roadway and the dark masses of foliage and the balancing group of trees—the one to the right is of ash, and that to the left, which rises and breaks the line of dark, is a group of any kind of trees you please.



Illus. XIII

A Drawing without any Sky Detail

being considered. Whatever knowledge the writer may have in the manner of planning a picture has been gained in this way.

And now let us consider the subject of flat country as a painting ground. I have during my life had much advice as to where I should go in order to get good subjects for my pencil and brush, but never have I been told to seek a flat country. Always has the adviser urged me to get my inspirations amongst hills and mountains. Needless to say, such advice has always been very meekly listened to but never taken, as it is bad beyond words. The country where the landscape painter's art arose is a flat one, and it is to flat country that the student should proceed in order to find the best fields for his labour.

A flat country means fine distances and grand clouds, which are both essential in the landscape painter's art. A few examples, showing the kind of composition which is to be seen in a flat district, are here given.

The first was painted near Bardeney, and in the distance is seen Lincoln Cathedral. In such a picture, the whole question of success rests with the placing of the foreground objects in their relationship to the distant cathedral. Not only has every care to be taken with the drawing, but colour and values must be considered with an infinity of pains. Again and again a student passes by such a charming composition as this with the remark that nothing could be made of such a flat country. No doubt the difficulties are great as against the old familiar composition in which a lake, a mountain, and a foreground group of cattle were the ever-recurring theme. But difficulties have to be met and mastered, so let us continue the task.

As the learner becomes more and more accustomed to working in such a county as Lincolnshire, the extraordinary beauties of open land grow on him rapidly. In a very short time, to be amongst hills and deep valleys, where there is no chance of seeing into a far distance, becomes so oppressive that the flat open country is craved for. There must be no mistaking my meaning in thus expressing my preference for the class of country now being considered. The Yorkshire moors, or the rolling downs of Berkshire and Wiltshire, are equally the painter's happy hunting-ground, with the flats and fens of Cambridge or Lincolnshire. Nothing is said here about Holland, Belgium, and France.

I have been led away in trying to point a moral in Composition

ILLUSTRATION XIV

DISTANT VIEW OF LINCOLN

Two Stages showing the effect of the absence and addition of a strong foreground.

STAGE I

THE two drawings facing this page were suggested by a lesson I was giving near Lincoln. The distant towers of the cathedral are seen on the skyline of the flat country that forms the valley of the River Witham. I had selected the subject carefully, and by the end of the morning my pupils had painted some successful studies. I was looking through them, and chatting on the result of their labours, as was my custom, when I was asked if it would be possible to introduce a strong foreground of varied objects, so as to emphasize the far-away look of the distant cathedral. Wishing to interest my students, I said that I would add such a foreground to the drawing I myself had made.

ILLUSTRATION XV

STAGE II

THE position we had taken up in the morning, in order to get the picture No. 1, was about fifty yards in front of some farm buildings and a few stunted trees. Removing my "station point" backwards fifty yards or so, I brought between myself and the distant view the rough tree and cart, as shown in illustration No. 2, and proceeded to paint these objects over my work in strong warm colours. The result, as will be seen, not only gave an interest to the foreground, but also tended to make the middle distance meadows and the far distance buildings recede materially. When such an addition as this is attempted to a drawing, I would point out the necessity not only of using strong rich colours, but also of paying particular attention that the objects should be accurate in all their details, which, in the quite near part of a picture can never be overdone.



Illus. XIV

DISTANT VIEW OF LINCOLN—FIRST STAGE



Illus. XV

DISTANT VIEW OF LINCOLN—SECOND STAGE

to intrude on the chapter which will deal exclusively with the places suitable for work.

The next picture here reproduced is of Siddlesham Mill, near Selsey, which is situated in the middle of those flats which stretch from Worthing westward. Probably between Chichester and Selsey, and then from Bognor to West Wittering the flattest part of the whole district is found. Many friends who have shown great anxiety to keep me in the right path I should follow when painting from nature have become quite pained and sorrowful when I have declared my intention of having another trip to the Selsey country.

To return to the question of Siddlesham Mill. For such a picture the clouds are of paramount importance, giving strength to the foreground by their shadowing, and affording by their silvery masses the necessary lighting to the picture. The low-lying distant downs lead one away as well as lend a feeling of repose and mystery.

Another interesting feature in these low-lying districts is the fact that slow-running rivers find their way through them. Few points in a landscape add more to its beauty than does the presence of water, whether in the form of rivers, lakes, or ponds.

Experience will teach the student fully to appreciate the class of country which has here been very lightly hinted at, and to learn how readily it lends itself to the making of pictures. I could proceed to give instances without end to justify flat country as a study ground, but other matters must be dealt with, so this one must be reluctantly left.

That part which incident plays in a picture is to the young student a difficulty of the first degree, and one which troubles a painter to the last. In order to make this point clear to the beginner, let it be said that incident means the various small distractions in detail which go to give a living interest to a picture. Some of the greatest painters have loved to put an infinity of incident into their works, and have done so with great success. To give an illustration, the horses and cart with their attendant waggoner, the ducks on the foreground pond, figures passing along the middle distance road, cattle and sheep in the field part of our picture, may all be incidents in the same composition, and all justify their presence by the admirable way in which they may be introduced.

Now the great scheme of a good picture should be a simple thing,

ILLUSTRATION XVI

Siddlesham Mill, near Chichester, Sussex

THIS drawing of an old Sussex mill near Chichester was done in that beautiful flat land that stretches from Bognor westwards, and inland from the sea to the South Downs. In this curious quiet part of the world a landscape painter can find many subjects amid pleasant surroundings. The whole country for miles is very flat. The distant Downs I kept far away and very light, and the student must be very careful indeed in painting them, as the sky above is also light, and becomes lighter and lighter as the mass of bright cloud high up in the heavens is approached and merges into it. Light washes of ivory-black should be used, warmed or cooled as required by blues or reds. There is a great difficulty in the way when it is found necessary to introduce into the distant Downs any suggestion of detail. Avoid all dryness when making such attempts, but rather put the colours on wet, and then it will be found that a proper quality of atmosphere is maintained, and also the effect of distance. For the dark masses of trees that are shadowed by the right hand cloud, a colour made by mixing ivory-black, cyanine and french blue was used : be careful in the proportions ; this must be left to the judgment of the student. The water-ways that abound in this country again came to my help, in affording a complement to the big light cloud. As usual when painting a picture of this type, warm and rich browns helped me in the foreground. I draw attention to the tall chimney to the left of the mill, as it adds much to the interest of the buildings. No suggestion of any kind of life is made : it is a lonely, deserted spot, so I tried to preserve its character.



Illus. XVI

SIDDLESHAM MILL, NEAR CHICHESTER, SUSSEX

and incidents, however numerous, should always be made to play their subordinate parts modestly, so that they never disturb the general plan of the design. It is difficult to pass by this question of incident without reference being made to the grand "Harvest Landscape with Rainbow" by Rubens, in the Wallace Collection, of which excellent reproductions can be had. This marvellous picture is full of incident, and yet nothing in it distracts the mind in the slightest degree from the quiet grandeur of its scheme. The introduction of such detail into a picture, if successfully accomplished, is only within the province of the master.

The student should seek simple themes for his pencil and brush, and strive to make them as perfect as possible. This reference to incident in a composition was made in order to show that even an abundance of detail need not of itself be hurtful to the picture, but rather tend to give it interest and sparkle.

A very different class of subject must now be considered, which although not being strictly landscape, can very well be included in this chapter. Reference is here made to towns and buildings generally. Here, as in an open landscape, the central point of interest should engage the attention, and then the subsidiary parts should be painted to support and emphasize it. Nothing can be more deadly dull than the laboured and mechanical pictures and buildings which were produced in such vast quantities during the middle of the nineteenth century and onwards. And yet if this class of subject is seen at its best, the charm of it is very evident and its possibilities are great. As an additional inducement to the beginner, many very simple pictures can be found in village streets, farm buildings, detached cottages, and work of a like nature.

As helps in compositions of this kind, few men afford in their work more substantial assistance than do John Sell Cotman for the exterior of buildings, and the Dutch painter Bosboom for interiors. The work of the latter artist is in his particular way quite perfect, being full of interest and poetic charm. In this branch of painting—water-colour of course being meant—I most strongly advise against large drawings being attempted, for it is quite impossible to make such a delicate medium deal with a work beyond a certain size. Even the best men have come to frightful grief when they have attempted to paint large pictures of buildings in water-colours. As an example, I refer the reader to the large picture of "Lincoln Cathedral" by Peter de Wint in the Victoria

and Albert Museum. Of course there are parts of it that are good, but the size makes it quite impossible. As a general rule it is advisable to begin and end a water-colour drawing at one sitting, or two at the most; but in case of an elaborate building the thing would be impossible, so there need be no limit to the time spent on such a subject.

The whole of the drawing being completed, every effort should be made to paint it during one sitting, otherwise it will look patchy and possess no emotional interest. As experience accumulates and the faculties become more alive to the beauties in nature, the selection of a good composition becomes almost an instinct. When this happy condition is arrived at, let its possessor beware how he ignores its subtle urgings. Many a time have I in my earlier days of work been very strongly drawn to a subject, but have passed it by because there was included in such a scene some obviously commonplace and ugly object.

Now to shun a picture for such a reason is a grave mistake, as beauty must have been there, otherwise it would not have attracted. Rest assured, that as the power to see the beautiful increases, the most commonplace objects may under certain conditions become full of charm. Sunlight and shadow, atmosphere and line, at times become such potent factors, that their influence is all-powerful. The following is an instance. Some few years since, when working in the neighbourhood of a country town in the south of England, I was very forcibly attracted by what appeared to me a very sweet picture. At first I felt rather annoyed that such a subject had so strongly appealed to me, as the chief object on a river which formed the foreground was nothing less than, in itself, a very hideous, absolutely new modern laundry of startling architectural peculiarities. Still feeling the attractiveness of the whole thing, but scarcely knowing whence it came, I anchored, and sitting quietly down studied the whole thing at leisure. As I gained a clearer perception of the values and tones, the reason why my attention had been arrested became obvious. The mass of ugly building before mentioned was entirely bathed in a delightful cold grey shadow, which obscured practically all its ugly detail.

And now came out a truth which I did not before observe, namely, that the silhouette of the laundry was very charming, and its colour, influenced by the atmosphere, made an equally charming contrast against the warm and sunny downs beyond.

Moreover, the silhouette of the building repeated its shapely quality in the river. Needless to say, the drawing was done with great satisfaction. In this case, instinct at first called attention; then reason objected to the building, which was known to be wholly ugly (excepting the silhouette which had not been observed) and, finally, attentive inquiry explained why instinct had prompted.

Such an experience makes it very evident that great care should be taken when working from nature not to miss opportunities through allowing prejudices to influence one. Very seldom does it happen that the exact thing presents itself; the good must therefore be taken and the bad eliminated whenever necessary. I do not mean to convey the idea that a student should set out with the intention of making drastic alterations in a view which he may have selected. For instance, if a telegraph-post comes into a picture, it should without doubt be included, for it is quite likely that its presence may have given just that balance to the landscape which attracted.

Very justly may alterations be effected in such a case as the following. Painting in Surrey a few years since, I was much attracted by a very beautiful picture as I was walking along the banks of the River Wey. My mood was pensive (some folks would have called it ill-tempered), as the day so far had been unproductive of work. However, the evening came, and with it something to paint, which was accordingly commenced at once. As the picture proceeded, the presence of some rather peculiar, almost eccentric, details in the composition became evident. The middle distance church tower, which was rather to the left, was on a level with a group of elm trees to the middle right, and these objects were just in line with the upper part of a small footbridge in the left foreground.

Now here is a case where the artist must think, and arrange the composition by raising or depressing the objects so as to give a variety of line and avoid monotony. Such points as this continually occur when you are painting from nature, and it is under such circumstances that alterations and adjustments are fully justified. The student, as he gains experience by his studies from nature, will find that such alterations as those pointed out will become quite easy and need little consideration. It is, however, very dangerous to get into the habit of simply taking the pictorial object in front of one and upon it to build a composition. Such

work must be left for the studio; it does not enter into the scope of this book, which is intended as a help in outdoor work, with the simple exception of still life study. It is very peculiar, when the practical experience of work is being unravelled, to find how one thing leads to another, with apparently very little connection between the two.

The point just considered, by which it is evident that alteration of line has to be made, brings very forcibly to my mind the way familiar objects should be seen and painted. To begin with, let a group of cattle be taken as an example. Of course, it is admitted that cattle of all kinds have the usual complement of legs and feet, which fact the young student invariably insists in demonstrating in a very exact way. If attention, however, is carefully paid to the actual appearance of these features, it will be seen that a group of cattle as it gets farther and farther into the background becomes subject to the effect of an ever-increasing convention. A group of such beasts in the foreground should be, if possible, as Cuyp painted them, furnished with the right proportion of legs, feet, horns, etc. But let the same objects be viewed as they recede, and it will be noted that the evidence of how they are built becomes less and less, until they assume a mere appearance of coloured dots on the landscape. Yet during all this gradual change they always remain cattle, and could never be mistaken for aught else.

Herein lies the difficulty, and also the necessity for indefatigable labour in observation. I early found such study a labour, but a highly interesting one. It was my custom to try, as far as possible, to set down the exact appearance of cattle, sheep, ploughing teams, hay-making and harvesting groups, etc., from the foreground to the extreme distance. Human beings naturally come into such a category. The same rule should apply to all objects in nature. A group of trees five miles away should be as evidently a group of trees as if it were a hundred yards away. Details will gradually merge, but the main characteristics should remain to proclaim their identity. This is rather a digression from the question of composition, but the composing and the points here touched upon lie very near to one another.

To return to our proper subject, it must always be borne in mind that the question as to what is a correct and proper composition is of very wide interpretation. Without any doubt, the young student should adhere to certain fixed laws, which are apparent in the works of great masters of the past and the present. Such

examples should be held by the beginner as his guide and authority, and his paintings executed with the masters' works in mind. Later on, as the learner becomes the learned, he may at will venture on picture schemes which are new in plan, and are in fact a law unto themselves. It is, however, with practical questions that we have to deal, and therefore speculation must be avoided. As soon as the faculty for arrangement (in other words, composition) begins to get clearer to the student, the exercise now given may be found of great help. In no way do I recommend it as at all necessary, but just a thing which my experience has taught me to be of advantage. It was my habit to visit any one of the great picture collections, and make quite simple drawings in my notebook of such pictures as very strongly appealed to me. In this way not only were my ideas strengthened, but it became now and then very evident that I had unwittingly fallen into errors. Needless to say, great care must be taken in the selection of such works for study and confirmation. An admonition of this kind is very needful, as very bad pictures are to be found in most collections, whether they be of works by past or present painters.

CHAPTER VII

SOME DIFFICULTIES IN WORKING FROM NATURE, AND HOW TO MEET THEM

APART from the great difficulty, which is ever apparent, as to how a picture is to be produced direct from nature, there are many minor checks and hindrances which present themselves to the young student. Of some of these, which I have met with during my experience of painting landscapes in the open, I will speak, as they will no doubt help others who are embarked on a like quest. I am not here concerned with technical matters, but simply with those trivial incidents which at once arise when a trip has been planned and the day's work is actually started.

I do not think after many years of landscape painting that any single obstacle is so calculated to put one out of humour as a high wind. Now such a condition of atmosphere is usually accompanied with charming incidents in the way of clouds. So never put off a day because you are likely to be blown about a bit. At the same time, do not try and sit in the wind, or the result of your morning or afternoon's work will probably end in nothing satisfactory being accomplished. It is again absolutely certain that a vile fit of ill-temper and a general disgust with everything will result. To sit in a high wind and face all the horrid inconvenience likely to arise from so doing, is only to be thought of if something superlatively fine is to be the reward of such heroism.

I have always found, as a general rule, that the best plan is to seek carefully for a sheltered spot. At all costs be as comfortable as possible when engaged in painting out of doors. You will find plenty of heart-breaking difficulties without adding to them by being uncomfortable in your surroundings. I remember painting in a terrible wind at Richmond, in Yorkshire. I struggled through my work with great resolution, and had my virtue rewarded near the end of my labour by an extra violent gust of wind knocking

up my board and upsetting some very dirty water over my drawing. No one was near me at the time, fortunately, so matters gradually cleared up. However, I never shy at a windy day, but I do struggle to secure a fairly sheltered spot.

This incident reminds me to advise a well-secured water-dipper under all conditions. Cows are simple innocent creatures, but do not leave your paint-box open when you absent yourself from your work for a time. I did so once, with the result that a cow or two in the field where I was working came, and after inspecting what I had been about made a meal off my paints. They are most inquisitive animals, and I suppose paints are a bit tasty. I eat a good lot of them myself, but chiefly being engrossed with my subject I have never noticed if they taste at all.

Some of my pupils have been quite alarmed at the number of times I put my brush in my mouth. One lady besought me not to eat any more paint, thinking, I suppose, that her instructions would be brought to a sudden stop by my untimely end. As a matter of fact, I find there is no better way of getting a point to my brush than by putting it in my mouth. It is a bad habit, but will doubtless remain with me now.

Being out on a painting trip reminds me that I have often come to grief through using the trifling little camp stool that my pupils very often affect. Use a good-sized strong stool, as it is far more comfortable, although it is a little more trouble to carry. Reference to these trifles is important, since your work can only gain if you enjoy a certain degree of comfort when working from nature. My tramps through the various paths and bypaths of England have taught me how necessary it is to be very well-behaved and full of courtesy when dealing with farmers and country folks generally. It may seem a trifling transgression to walk into a farmyard and sit down to paint a picture of it without asking permission. Many farmers will not resent such an act, although they may feel it an intrusion all the same. Some, however, will roughly request the artist to leave their premises as they are not for public use. I have had poured out to me by brother artists tales of the gross incivility of farmers. My experience has taught me, however, that they are good-natured and anxious to do all in their power to help a visitor. I have always got on well with farmers for the simple reason that, when I have wished to use any part of their premises, I have first asked permission to do so. The result has been that not only has my request been conceded,

but I have been told to go where I liked about the farm or its buildings.

My attention has been called to one or two matters of importance. The gates must be closed, I must look out for the "bull," and not smoke in the rick-yard or barns. I have often been asked to take tea in the best parlour, and upon one occasion my whole class was regaled with very fine strawberries and the best of cream. To women students I give a piece of advice which I think most necessary. When they are working out in the evening alone, let them be careful to avoid long walks in the failing light to their hotel or apartments. The farm labourer is a good type of man—rough, very possibly, but seldom worse. It is the tramp who wanders from one casual ward to another who is to be feared, as he is usually a bad lot and often very brutal. There is, however, another type of creature who is generally in evidence in a country village. I refer to the "silly-billy" of the parish: in other words, the local epileptic. If you cannot get, or do not care for a companion, then have a dog, or another kind of barker if you have sufficient confidence to use it. I mean this advice to be taken very seriously, as I am certain it deals with a real source of danger which should not be courted.

A very different difficulty which is ever present is our delightfully varying climate. I am quite contented with it, although nothing is more abused than the English climate. I refer to this common topic, as weather plays such a very important part in the life of one who paints from nature. Do not be put off your work and arrange to do something else if the day starts badly. No time is usually more beautiful than the afterpart of a day that began with frowns and tears. The rainy month is generally the best month for painting. The clouds are usually good, and the air in between the rain is clear. I have painted much when the ground has been wet and the sky threatening. Have something waterproof to put your feet on, and do not get chilled, and all will be well. I have seldom been able to sit out much before June or after October. Work beyond or before these dates has just been in the form of notes which I have made without sitting down. I have usually been punished if I have abandoned this rule.

During the months I mention there is scarcely a day when it is mpossible to paint—sometimes at one time, and sometimes at another, work can be done. When a trip has been planned and

the district to be painted decided on, try and arrange a suitable place of work for wet days—an old church, some sheltered ruin, or interesting farm buildings. It is often difficult to manage this getting a covered ground for work ; but do it, else many a miserable hour is in store for you. Few things are more wretched than waiting and watching for the weather to improve.

I have had my full share in the past of the doubt which has often pestered me as to the choice of a subject. The most fatal thing to do is to pass by a thing that is quite pleasing, in order to find one still better. If a view or effect has arrested your attention, you can safely conclude that there is something special in it. I took years to learn this, and now I never pass by a subject which has cried halt to me. It must not be thought that work is always to be found, even in the most charming localities. Very often a long tramp is quite fruitless. This, however, cannot be helped, as the emotions must be stirred, otherwise little good is likely to result.

There is one point I should like especially to impress on the student and beginner, which I fancy I have mentioned before under rather different conditions. Never let a hideous modern building put you off a subject, because it intrudes itself prominently into it. If your mind has been arrested by something that appeals to you, depend upon it there is good in it. No undue disappointment should be felt when work is not easily found ; such an experience is common to all, and ever will be.

The type of country recommended by unprofessional friends is invariably bad. Naturally they know nothing about the subject, and cannot tell the kind of country which is likely to supply subjects. I think I have been advised to paint Leith Hill, in Surrey, by most of my lay friends. It is usually pointed out as most suitable as a painting ground for the reason that such a vast number of counties can be seen from its summit. Needless to say I have not taken it on yet, and trust I never may.

It is very ill-advised to work after a long walk or bicycle-ride. The finest subject will not appeal so fully under such conditions. Have lunch or a cup of tea, and then all will be well. After long experience, I still adhere to my rule of doing without an umbrella. I have given elsewhere my experience of a very hot day and nearly getting sunstroke ; but this was very unusual heat, and I did not even take the precaution of protecting the back of my neck. I like all the light I can get, in spite of rapidly drying paints.

In some villages and towns the nuisance caused by children is very great. It is quite necessary sometimes to avoid working when the schools close in the morning or afternoon. After these special periods the young folks seem to pack themselves away in holes and corners, and so leave the student in peace. It is fatal to try and tempt them to depart by offering money for so doing. They take your money and go for a few minutes, but always return vastly reinforced. I have known of instances abroad where police protection has been sought and procured quite easily, as the authorities recognize the fact that the artist and art student are a considerable means of revenue to their town. I am always very careful about hiring small boys to carry my boards and camp stool. Upon one occasion a friend of mine was summoned to appear before the magistrates to answer a charge of decoying a child away from school.

I have found that in choosing a companion for a painting trip the greatest care is necessary. The nerves get a bit on edge if things do not go right, and then the meeting at meals or in the evening is likely to be dull—if not worse—should the day have been productive of extra disappointments. I have generally gone alone, as I know myself and do not want to fall foul of friends. Friendships are more easily snapped than made, and two of a trade seldom agree on matters technical. I know it is dull spending the evenings alone after a tiring day. It is a blessing to be a good sleeper, as extra bed does no harm, and troubles are forgotten. The most well-chosen couple of friends I ever knew devoted themselves to different studies. One used to paint, and the other was an organist and spent her day in the parish church. They were both charming, and never got in one another's way in the slightest degree.

On seeing a place for the first time, it may be after a tiring railway journey, do not hastily conclude that it will not do. Take a good rest and then have a walk round, doing no work on the first day but merely exploring. I have known several occasions when first impressions have been very erroneous indeed. I knew an artist who took a dislike to a place at first sight and quitted it the same evening he got there. Years afterwards he went to the same town again and had entirely to alter his views of it. As a result, he remained a considerable time and painted a number of good things.

CHAPTER VIII

CLOUDS AND SKIES

HERE and there I have scattered a few words on the subject of skies and clouds, but I consider them a subject well worthy a place all to themselves. Nothing in nature has afforded me greater pleasure than contemplating the sky and its ever-changing moods. I have felt ever since I started painting from nature that here was much that would last me for my lifetime. As years go by, I get to know better and better that my task will never be accomplished. A bit here and a bit there I seem to grasp and in one way or another express. However, I am not going to shock the student by conjuring up before him a terror of difficulty. I will instead give him some of my experiences, in the hope that from them he will learn something practical.

Again, however, I must speak disparagingly of those handbooks on painting from nature, especially when they treat of skies. Their utter irregularity (I refer to clouds and skies) makes any orderly plan of dealing with them impossible. Nowhere in the wide field of nature is it so necessary as in this, that the student should for ever be making notes. To sit down, and as an early task begin painting a cloudy sky, is to court failure. I found it a most useful exercise when a student to spend whole days trying to copy bits of clouds, and then from memory paint a complete thing. The early efforts to paint skies and clouds from nature will almost invariably be poor crude things. This must be faced resolutely, as a condition of labour and experience inseparable from so arduous a task. When beginning the study of clouds, any thought of washing out and repainting must be put aside. Do it as badly and as crudely as you may, but let your work be direct. Clouds pass so quickly, that for a long time it will only be a semblance of the effect aimed at that you will obtain.

I always first think of the position of the sun and time of day. These points give me the light and shade scheme and the general

ILLUSTRATION XVII

A Cloud Study

CLOUDS have a very objectionable habit of being always more or less in a hurry. Occasionally the rapidity of their movements has annoyed me, a feeling which most students must acknowledge they have themselves felt. This remark is merely to preface the advice to do all that is possible to simplify your methods when making studies of clouds. In this sketch I lightly brought the tone of the clear sky up to the great mass of cloud, and used the same tone partly to shape it. When quite dry the darker shadows were put in as shown, and this was also used to suggest the landscape. It is quite conceivable that very beautiful drawings might be made in this way, and I have shown in the text that this plan is very expeditious when dealing with such models as clouds. The one difficulty is the drying, but as a day on which such effects are seen is probably both sunny and windy, this should not be very difficult.



Illus. XVII

A Cloud Study

colour. The illustration here given will serve to show how broad an effect can be obtained with very little detail of work. The quickest methods must be those sought for as the best for outdoor painting. The student often spoils a good effort by not knowing when to leave well alone. It is the best plan when painting a landscape at sunset time for the beginner to be contented with a plain sky. The lightest part of such a sky will be about a third up from the horizon and occupy about a third of the space from that point to the zenith or uppermost part of the painting. Then immediately below the lightest period it gets darker till the sky-line is reached. I always found this a comforting way to proceed, as it gave me plenty of time to think about the rest of the landscape. At the same time, I was able thoughtfully to study the colour and gradations of such a sky, without having the extra difficulty of clouds. Of course a stormy sunset should not be chosen for this exercise, but one where there are clouds that are not too aggressive.

The north-eastern sky is often most lovely at sunset time. It is at such a time that comparatively simple cloud masses can be seen which remain fairly motionless. Every advantage should be taken of these quiet times to register with pencil and brush the attractions of nature thus spread out. Every opportunity should be seized by the student to note it when nature sees fit to display a simple pile of beauty for our delectation.

Clouds are curious things to study. At one time full of fairy-like qualities and at another gathering together in appalling masses of stormy fierceness. A very important matter to be observed in painting a sky is to avoid allowing the darkest value to occupy too large a portion of the whole. Let the chief masses be of the middle values and then the lights and the darks will speak most forcibly.

Nothing in nature wants so tenderly dealing with as a sky. The most stormy and overcast firmament must be treated tenderly, otherwise it will become opaque and lose all that quality of transparency which is so full of charm. It has always been a source of wonder to me how one can ever hope to produce this transparency by means so clumsy as "washing and stippling" the things in nature.

Truly has it been written, that in order to give to an evening sky that quiet falling to rest of Nature, the clouds must be of a horizontal kind. The rough drawing of a sunset which I here give

will explain my meaning better than any words I can use, although a few sentences will be of use as an accompaniment. The fierce and disturbed clouds uprising and agitated may often be seen at the beginning of a stormy and windy day ; but in order to express the quietly ending day—its finish, and sinking to repose, the clouds must be of a reposeful kind, which is best expressed by the sleeping lines of clouds that are associated with the end of a windless day.

In the same way Nature awakes, and the early morning sky at sunrise is of a like kind, and is best shown in quiet horizontal lines. The character of a sunset is a sinking to rest of Nature, and its awakening should be equally peaceful.

CHAPTER IX

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Sussex

THE very pleasant task I have now set myself is to take the student through those varied scenes which have supplied me with inspiration. These pages include the experiences of many years, and are intended to help the beginner, the advancing student, and here I stop to take breath before I conclude the list with—the artist. Conscious of the difficulties which have and do beset my path, I hesitate to address others save my fellow students. However, some of these wanderings may interest my fellow workers, even those to whom I look with respect and admiration.

When thinking over the scheme of this book it seemed very evident to me that a part of it should be devoted to a consideration of the places best suited for study. As we wander through different parts of the land, occasionally bypaths may be visited which are only distantly related to the subject in hand, but these must kindly be looked upon as whims of the writer. Again, there will be constant looking back to former pages, and much talk about method, values and composition. I resort to constant repetition, so that points of great moment may be highly polished by use. These forewords are considered necessary for the better understanding of remarks which might otherwise appear irrelevant in a chapter devoted to the land best suited to water-colour painting. I made a very early beginning as an Art student. When between eight and nine years of age I visited the National Gallery, and was duly impressed with the masterpieces of Turner, Constable and Crome. No, I was not taken there by my parents or guardians, but went with four other boys of my own age to look at pictures, having heard from an older boy that he believed it to be a good place to see them. The force of example was so great that very soon after this visit another juvenile expedition

ILLUSTRATION XVIII

Stanmer Park, Sussex

THE South Downs provide the painter with endless subjects of a character such as the one represented opposite. Stanmer Park is situated between Brighton and Lewes, with the Downs sheltering it to the south. The day I painted this picture was clear and sunny, with a charming softness in the air, and a lovely grey blueness over everything: a typical late spring day. The sky was cool towards the left, but warming in its tone as the source of light was approached to the right. The Downs to the left I managed with a limpid wash of pure cyanine, but as I neared the hills to the right I added new blue and a little ivory-black, and then burnt sienna, yellow ochre, and rose-madder as warming-up colours as the middle distance was dealt with. Occasionally, when shadows found their way into the mid-distant part, I used new blue or french ultramarine alone. The shadowed tree masses in the valley were painted with french ultramarine, ivory-black, light red, and cyanine, and the sunny parts washed over with yellow ochre, naples yellow, and rose-madder. To these colours I added burnt sienna, raw sienna, green oxide of chromium, and a little emerald-green, as the foreground came under my consideration. For the groups of cattle I used ivory-black, light red, burnt sienna, and indian red, and a mixture of burnt sienna and yellow ochre, which also, I find, makes a good colour when painting a tawny cow. When selecting this subject I was particularly struck with a blue greyness that pervaded the whole landscape: such a tone being common in the spring, but, as far as my experience goes, not seen at other time of the year. In the foreground a fairly warm tone prevailed, and the cattle were bright spots that relieved the density of the near shadowed wood. This drawing was painted on Whatman paper (thin).



Illus. XVIII

Stanmer Park, Sussex

was planned, and this time it was to study landscape drawing from nature.

The enthusiasm of these early years was intense, and still it continues to broaden and strengthen. And here let it be recorded that I found nothing but encouragement from my parents, in that which was so evidently my great joy. Thus early aspirations should be treated without undue pressure, or advice. The next work from nature that was attempted was in Sussex, when my love of the South Downs began, which was to be lasting, and was to help to form my love for that class of country.

And now let me describe those wanderings in quest of subjects for brush and pencil which have lasted for many years and included a great and varied land of delight. The first summer and autumn in the open country was spent in the neighbourhood of Pulborough, Sussex. This very fine ground is one of the most varied in England, including as it does the rolling Downs, the beauteous River Arun and its valley, the distant views of Arundel and Amberley, and still further to the west the stately spire of Chichester. This land has been painted by some of the greatest, but never can its glories be exhausted, and never will its sweet enchantment grow less. To the student who is putting to the test his early knowledge of composition, values, and colour, Pulborough Bridge, with the village rising behind, is ready for his trial of skill. Again, if a walk is taken over Houghton Bridge and up the road to the north of Arundel Park, the picture which unfolds itself upon looking south-east is one of surpassing grandeur.

I remember very well painting this picture, and the intense pleasure it gave me. Let us get back for a moment to the questions of method and composition, and then for a space this view shall be repainted. The time was getting short for so large a subject, yet the thing was so beautiful that it had to be done. There was the distance of the Downs, and beyond, the open miles of flat country stretching to the sea all suffused with the light of the declining sun. In the middle ground the stately pile of Arundel Castle, with the timber masses immediately surrounding it. The details of building and trees, whose outline stood out in strong silhouette against the distant lit-up land and sea and sky, were firmly drawn in, showing finely. And now was carried out in practice the scheme of allowing the carefully put in period of light distance to come up to, but not touch, the middle distance castle and trees. The great round masses of near woodland opposed

themselves to the middle distance, and were in turn kept clear and to themselves by the thin line of dry paper which intervened.

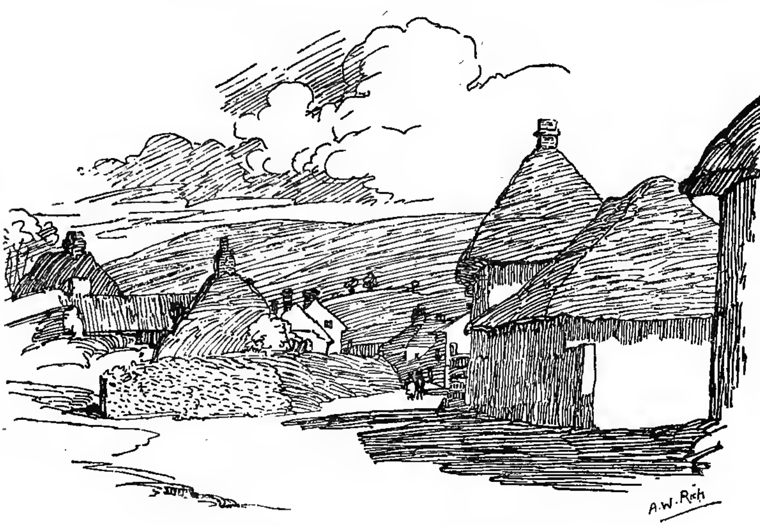
In the foreground was an undulating downland, sombre and strong in the deepening shades of evening, and then, glorious intervention, a group of deer introduced themselves on the edge of the foreground down and sparkled in white and red and black against the dense near masses of wood. Every plan I knew was requisitioned to facilitate my work, and as each part of the picture passed from under my hand it was finished completely. Yet one thing did wait and that was the thin lines of white paper which interposed their tiny zone of safety and prevented the planes of tone and values from hopelessly mingling with one another. Hastily all was done, and yet each part had sufficient time allotted to its doing to prevent either hurry or carelessness. When all was perfectly dry, the little white lines were filled in very carefully, and the task was completed.

Do not let the student be depressed or mortified, if the first time he ventures on such an undertaking as this the result is bound to be distressing. Often and often must the day end in a sad homecoming, yet let it always be borne in mind that success comes out of apparent failure, and that it is those who will not admit defeat who succeed. When you are taken through these pleasant lands and shown those subjects with which you will continually struggle and which you will yet always love, you should never forget that a notebook must constantly be your companion. Pages filled with all and everything which attracts the attention to its beauty are always an interesting reminder to the student of the fields of his labour. Continual practice also strengthens the technical experience, as well as trains the eye to seize on the salient points of a landscape with ever-increasing correctness. For years I have never been without a notebook, and in these books I have recorded an infinity of subjects which attracted me as possessing elements of interest. The locality to which I am now giving attention is very unusual in many ways, and particularly suited to the young student. Much work can be done along the banks of the Arun, as barges come up some distance from its mouth at Littlehampton. Such subjects as river craft are admirable for picture making, and most certainly tend by their difficulty to strengthen the power of drawing.

There is generally to be found a group of barges at Arundel, and very often vessels of a much larger kind. When I was working

in this part of Sussex, and had my headquarters at Pulborough, I used to plan day trips to places in the near neighbourhood. One very pretty and interesting trip can be taken to Amberley, which is on the north slope of the Downs across the marshes, or, as these are locally called, the brooks.

Amberley Castle itself supplies some very fine subjects, and there is also a charming view of Pulborough when half across the brooks. As an added attraction to these marshes the cattle are of

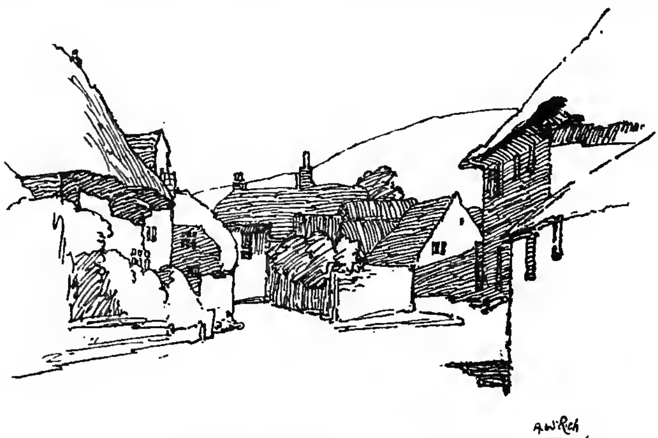


Illus. XIX. Amberley, Sussex

great interest, for it is a fine grazing country, and they are ever present to add their colour to the picture. This was the locality where I used to make a series of cattle groups, beginning with those thirty or forty yards away and then gradually increasing the distance until the little crowd of beasts pictured was sometimes three or four miles distant. It is interesting to notice how details become lost until a group of cattle three or four miles away appears only like so many spots of colour. And now is evident the necessity for keen observation, as these spots must be painted with the greatest care, otherwise they will never resemble the animals for which they are intended. I think Ruskin said something like this when he referred to Turner and the recording

of a bridge at various distances. However, it is a very useful thing to do, whoever first thought of it. I found this plan most interesting in drawing various things seen at different distances. Such practice gives good exercise in finding out the essential elements in objects.

Thus, for instance, if a group of trees is the subject in hand, it is very difficult to see the masses of light and shadow when near to them as they are confused with the detail. Should we, however, get half a mile from the object the details will have nearly vanished and the construction be obvious through the play of



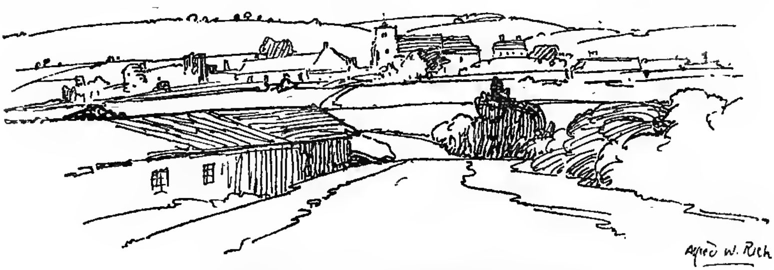
ILLUS. XX. AMBERLEY, SUSSEX

light and shade. The village and castle of Amberley are most charmingly situated, nestling under the Downs, which form a grand background when seen from the "Brooks." I made a water-colour drawing of it from this position one broiling hot day in July, when the white stone walls reflected the sun, and they looked like burnished silver for brightness, standing out against a deep blue sky with grand effect. There are many other good points in and around the place, but I liked this the best for a near picture, and more distant ones shall be noted in due course.

There is a particularly good picture to be seen on the way from the village to the railway station. The castle is seen resting quietly amongst the Downs, with a good road leading to it which generally has carts, cattle or people on it, and the whole thing is

backed up by the distant hills. I only give these points as they suggested themselves to me, but doubtless many more are to be found, and better ones, too, for the matter of that. I did this sunny drawing of the castle again years after I spent the summer at Pulborough, having bicycled from Hurstpierpoint in the morning and back again in the cool of the evening. Incidentally, I may remark that I never found any hand-shaking after even a long bicycle-ride, but I have never tried a motor-cycle, as I do not like them, and believe them to be very bad from a health point and likely to provoke any amount of hand-shaking and nerves.

Houghton Bridge, over the Arun here, is on the road to the north of Arundel Park, and past it on to Chichester. Up and down the river here wanderings can be made, and much that is



ILLUS. XXI. AMBERLEY CHURCH

interesting is to be seen. I did a small painting of Bury Church, and since the time I did it have seen the same subject in a great variety of moods, as nature spread sunlight or shadow over it, and dressed it in different garbs. I must remember, however, this is not a book on Sussex, which has already been so well done by Mr. E. V. Lucas, but merely notes of what I found in the county, pleasant and helpful for a water-colour student to work at.

I must hasten on with my jottings, so take the road to Fittleworth, and so on to Midhurst. Constable worked at the first-named place, painting the Mill more than once, I believe. The Common here is a fine sandy rough place, full of brightness of colour and well adapted for putting into practice a strong foreground in shadow when a break in a showery evening sky makes the contrast so bewilderingly charming. The more the student trudges with me and seeks to let his emotions find expression in

his work, the more, I am sure, will it become clear to him that the method of wash and stipple and scrub in water-colour can never supply the means to satisfy him. There are many other good things in this locality, but these must be left for the investigation of those who follow my footsteps in the districts I am pointing out.

Midhurst is a pretty town, and for those who love street pictures it affords attractions, as there are many interesting old houses. It is, however, to Cowdray Castle and park that I direct attention, as the park is full of fine timber subjects, and the castle is full of interest. Constable drew some of the ruined parts, and these studies should be seen if possible, as they are very fine. I do not know how the visitor gets on at Cowdray Castle now, as things have changed there of late years. But when I visited the place there was no objection made to my painting, which I did, both inside and outside the building. If the student finds when doing a building composition that he gets on well for a time, and expresses his intentions fairly, and then comes to a great and overwhelming stumbling-block, he should not hesitate to leave the drawing unfinished. I do not for a moment say that half-finished studies should be the order of the day, but under exceptional conditions this is the right course to pursue. It tends to far less mortification, and after all it is wise not to be too far cast down. I always followed this plan from the very first days I had with nature. I did that part of a subject which clearly appealed to me, and left the rest if likely to land me in a muddle. It is a very bad plan to be always avoiding difficulties in this way, but to resort to it as an exception I am sure is good.

This first summer I spent in the country painting from nature happened to be a very fine one for work, with a sufficient amount of broken weather to get clouds and atmosphere, and yet for the main part bright and sunny. In those days there were a few windmills in the district, which gave a nice variety of subject, and provided good drawing studies. I do not think many students would use up notebooks as rapidly as I did, but always to keep one at hand cannot be too much insisted on. I remember once starting the day with the determination of doing nothing but quick pencil studies. It was very interesting, and I finished up in the late evening with nearly seventy pages of my book filled. Very slight many of them were, but they all had a scheme of composition in them, and I am convinced such an exercise was

good. Large open landscapes, groups of trees, village streets, bridges, churches and castles, all were included.

Many only took a couple of minutes to do, and I do not remember that any occupied more than ten minutes. It all comes back to me as I write, particularly one of a distant view of Chanctonbury Ring, which took two minutes. For such a day's work as this there is no better country than this particular part of Sussex, as the things to be seen in a day's trudge are infinitely varied, as well as being of such great interest.

CHAPTER X

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Kent

NOTHING could afford a greater contrast to my first painting journey than my second. The first owes its chief interest to great stretches of open lowlands or rolling downs, with a mingling interest of rivers, woods and ruined castles, and the second teems with the life of a riverside manufacturing district. It was Rochester which now attracted my attention, and although since my first acquaintance with the place I have worked there many times, it still preserves its freshness for me, and I believe ever will.

It is rather startling at first, as the city is approached from the London side by rail. The mighty Norman keep, the squat cathedral tower (a spire has been added of late years which I do not think is an improvement), the bristling masts on the Medway, and the equally bristling mass of tall chimneys, all help in the general bustle which seems to be the keynote of the situation. I had to unravel the tangled mass of beauty in the best way I could, as the only word of recommendation was that of a friend who told me if I had never been to Rochester he thought I should find it rather a good place for painting. The young student need not be nervous, as here there are endless subjects to which he can sit down for hours, thinking them out quietly with no fear of the selected subject moving on. I refer to the ships and barges at anchor, as well as other objects in endless variety, which seem to come naturally in such a busy place.

I have studied for hours an old barge resting quietly between the tides. Very interesting, as well as difficult is the drawing of such an object. The sun bleaches the timbers into the most delicious colours, and the shadows change so slowly that their shapes can be quietly determined on a hot cloudless day with certainty, and painted without the hurry there always must be

when there are fleeting clouds. There is work here for all to do, from the young student making his first efforts through all the stages of labour, to the finished craftsman.

I did early work here, and have visited the place periodically for years. This is a rare place to tempt one to do the Victorian water-colour, simply because the whole thing can look so brilliantly beautiful at times, with its brilliant skies, white and red sails, and full-laden hay-barges. But do not fall into the habit of making a "pretty picture," else I shall be sorry I ever took you to this entrancing locality. A moment by the way, please, to show the kind of cold douche I had when working here some years since. The subjects I had been working at were so beautiful and varied, that I was getting a little puffed up, so that my fall was very salutary, and left me thinking. As is very common when one is painting near a populous town, many people had stopped to watch me working one day, and passed on with some trifling remark. I became aware, however, that one young person was more attentive than the rest, and being comely and well-favoured according to the gifts of nature, her presence was not irksome.

At last, having watched me attentively for about an hour, she very questioningly remarked that she did not suppose I ever tried to sell what I painted, and upon my replying that, curious as she might think it, sales did sometimes come my way, her response was that she did not wish to be at all rude, but that she had a young man friend who painted better than I did, but that he found it impossible to get rid of his efforts. The estimation in which she held her lover's work made her indifferent to the wounds she inflicted on others, and yet she was not very brutal as there was the saving clause, that she did not wish to be rude. However, my conceit was cured, and I pursued my task in a chastened spirit.

I will not break off again for a long spell, but as I trudge along recalling the past and telling what I know as to the beauties of the country visited, as well as giving my ideas as to how these should be dealt with, I find it difficult not to say a word now and again of the human side of my wanderings. This was a splendid place for humanity, but I will stick to my last, and only talk about such things as hay-barges, or better still, the Strood Cement Works across the water. These cement works are the most delightful sight, and to me are an ever-present joy when I am working in this neighbourhood. The cement seems to get every-

where, not only making the workers and their clothes cementy, but covering with its dust all the buildings, and even creeping up the innumerable tall chimneys.

Now the chief wonder of the place is when the sun shines, and the backing of it is the cold blue northern sky. Then is seen to perfection the weird character of the place and eke its beauty. The young student will surely be as I was when first I saw it, and will, I believe, only gain fresh interest as he revisits the spot, in this also being entirely in sympathy with me. The pictures culled from Strood are marvellous in their silvery beauty, and there are always strong foreground objects to be brought into a composition on the Rochester side of the river. Let us change our subject and go a short walk up Windmill Hill; it is no distance, and when this height is gained the full glory of the Medway is before us. Shipping, tall chimneys, smoke, the river broken into many parts, all and sundry go to make a picture, which is well amongst the finest in Great Britain. There is one point the beginner should always bear in mind when looking at such a grandly impossible thing for any one short of the finished workman, and that is, the picture may not be ventured on, but it can be looked at, and that with great advantage.

This is not the only view of a like magnitude, as there are many such, and each with a peculiar attraction all its own. There is not one of my working centres in England which could not supply material for a book entirely to itself. The water-colour student must be left with this field of labour, as with the others, to translate it in his own way, and, let me hope, to find in it joy equal to mine.

CHAPTER XI

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

WARWICKSHIRE AND THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES

MY first knowledge of this district was gained only a few years ago, when I had to go and stay at Shipston-on-Stour, in order to give some lessons in the neighbourhood. The actual place to be made the subject of our efforts was Honyngton Hall, a splendid old mansion near Shipston. The terraced gardens were to furnish me with the subjects for the lessons, and very fine pictures might result. It was a very happy time for me, as my pupils were apt, and I was able also to find plenty of time for my own painting. I need not have said anything about this lesson-giving incident, but I thought it afforded a good opportunity to have a chat about gardens and their interest to the student of water-colour work. A big garden of an old-fashioned kind, with lawns, terraces, and terrace-steps, is one of the greatest advantages to a student. The materials compose so well, and the various incidents are so charmingly attractive.

It is an especially good ground for value study, and also for subjects possessing definite constructive qualities. I did several garden paintings at Honyngton Hall, as the place appealed to me strongly. The question of garden painting must be gone into very deeply, as the mass of pictures we see claiming to be such, are feeble beyond words, in nearly every case possessing no merit at all. One may well wonder where the buyers of such miserable stuff come from, or how any galleries can be found to arrange such exhibitions. To liken them to the pages cut from an illustrated catalogue of some great seedsman would be saying rude things of such a firm, as usually these prints are most admirable, since they never profess to go beyond making a picture of a botanical specimen.

I am taking a very serious interest in my companion in this journey of investigation, and feel I must say a few homely truths

ILLUSTRATION XXII

THE TERRACE

NOTHING can afford greater qualities for the study of drawing and line composition than such a subject as "The Terrace." The material for a drawing of this type abounds all over England, so the student should experience no difficulty in getting a good subject of the kind whenever he so desires. Of all the objects in nature or of man's production, none so suffers from laboured treatment and from being washed and scrubbed as does this one. Look round the walls of an ordinary water-colour show, and having seen one method, then refer to the way John Sell Cotman treated stone and brick work, and the reason for my remarks will be evident. The one is laboured, unconvincing and feeble, while the other is full of the charm of a direct and forcible spontaneity. The steps, with their side-posts, made bright and sunny by the darks of the background, form the centre of the picture. All else comes in as a help to support and emphasize the object of chief interest. Here again will be seen how the light and dark parts are distributed over the surface of the drawing, but of this I will say no more as it is fully treated on when talking about the "Lock Gates." The colours of the stonework are so varied that it is literally impossible to say which particular ones should be used when painting it. However, as it may be of value, I will give the colours I find useful for this purpose. These are ivory-black, used in light washes, naples yellow, burnt sienna, and the variety of greys made up of red, blue and yellow, but these are in no way arbitrary.



Illus. XXII

The Terrace

about the silly manner in which gardens are often—well, I was going to say painted, but I really cannot; that term is too serious to apply to such rubbish. Again, I will ask the student to bear in mind that the great natural influences at work in the production of a picture are light and shadow. Brightness of colour there very often is in a garden, but the finest type to be painted is the formal garden, where straight walks, yew hedges, and terraces, are the chief points of interest. Do not think from these remarks that flowers in a garden are never to be painted, because it is possible to do them with fine effect. As a grand example nothing could be better than the " Minister's Garden " by Cecil Lawson, in the City Gallery, Manchester.

Look at the beauty of handling in the way the hollyhocks are managed, and it is very evident that flowers in a garden can be made a very noble monument. I found in garden painting in water-colours that the centre of interest should be done with strength and precision, leaving the subsidiary parts to be dealt with more incidentally. There is in this neighbourhood Compton Winyates—a mansion which has a stately garden of great beauty. The castle affords many subjects for the student, and the whole place abounds with interest. Although I did not spend much time in the investigation of gardens when I was here, I feel little doubt that should the student wish to prosecute his studies in this direction, many would be found, as there are fine old houses in the district. I shall not again refer to the painting of gardens, as it is a subject which can be left to the student to pursue in his own individual way.

The character of the rest of this district is that of many undulating and wooded parts of England. It is very finely seen on the road from Warwick to Shipston-on-Stour. In fact, of its class it is amongst the grandest, the masses of foliage receding in literal billows of woodland till they are lost in the distance and become blended with the sky. There is from Shipston a very interesting expedition which can be taken to Chipping Campden, which is, I believe, a few miles over the border into Gloucestershire.

When staying at Shipston I went this trip and found it full of interest. There is plenty of woodland scenery on the way, and when Chipping Campden is reached a fine feast is laid before all those interested in the beauties of a quite stately town. In those days a town street with an imposing church at its end had for me many charms, and here such a task is to be had to perfection. I

do not say such a subject will never again tempt me to paint it, but having done many such it may be a long time before it does. It is, however, a fine thing to do, as the stately mansions which form the street afford a fine opportunity to try and emulate Canaletto, and in doing so to find out how little one knows of drawing.

It may be interesting to note that this town was one of the residential places of the merchants who were interested in the West of England Woolstapling Industry, which flourished here in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I must digress a bit, but the professional part of my talks will be all the brighter for a halt now and then just to take breath and think. As I rested, the memory of a place came back to me which I would not have left unmentioned. I refer to Kenilworth Castle, the colour of which, in addition to its other interests, makes it a place on no account to be missed when painting in this locality. This castle comes very beautifully into landscapes hereabouts, and so it should be visited and noted.

Now the particular thing I want to refer to here is the use of coloured papers when making studies from nature. In my opinion the student, even if fairly far advanced, should leave such alone. In the first place, chinese white must be used, which is bad; and in the next place, such efforts are usually in imitation of the choice works of some master, and this is very bad. All such things are for the finished workman, and therefore the student should avoid them.

Before leaving this part of the country, mention must be made of Warwick Castle. It is a grand subject for a picture, especially as it presents itself from the bridge in the evening light. There are many other points from which it can be seen admirably, but this one from the bridge has always remained in my mind as I saw it on a lovely summer's evening and enjoyed painting it profoundly. It takes some time to get acquainted with this country, so, if possible, a lengthy trip to it is advised, and if this can be managed the reward is great.

CHAPTER XII

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Newbury (Berkshire) to Hungerford and Devizes and back across Wiltshire to Salisbury

THIS was a bicycle expedition which gave me much joy, and was, in addition, productive of a large amount of work. I did not get anything at the starting-point, although the student must not conclude from this that the place is uninteresting. I am giving merely my own experience, and having only one pair of eyes my seeing is limited to that extent. If anyone should feel tempted to venture on one of these journeys of mine, he should take my remarks as directions in general, and work them out for himself in all details.

The following is an illustration of the accidental way in which fine subjects can be discovered. As I was quietly jogging on my way across the Downs after leaving Marlborough, my attention was attracted to a sheep that was behaving in a very peculiar and irregular way. I got off my machine and watched the beast as it struggled and floundered about on its back, with an admiring mob of twenty or thirty other sheep. Thinking a friendly help would not be taken amiss, I walked down the sloping down (the road was on a ridge) to where the animal wriggled about with its legs flapping in the air. The struggles were now becoming less and less, and a quiet restfulness seemed to be settling down. However, I caught hold of two of its legs and threw the animal on to its side. So faint and worn out was the poor thing that it was several minutes before it could stand and, of course, begin nibbling the grass. This is all leading up to my reward, which came to me as soon as I saw Mr. Sheep restored to his normal state.

The point I had reached in order to minister to the comfort of the sheep disclosed to me a most heavenly view which was entirely hidden from the road. It was such a wonder of beauty, that gladly would I have ridden the whole 250 miles of my trip to see it, and

ILLUSTRATION XXIII

SILBURY HILL, WILTSHIRE

The painting of this picture is fully described in the text, on page 97.



Illus. XXIII

Silbury Hill, Wilts

register such a thing of loveliness. I tell this to show how zealously the hunt must be prosecuted, and how near a view of uncommon sort may be to the point we pass by as uninteresting. Just to satisfy any interest which I may have aroused in sheep, I may add that I met the shepherd a few minutes later on the road, and telling him of the incident received his warm and hearty thanks for the help I had given his sheep, as he assured me the creature would surely have died in a few minutes.

My next halt was near Silbury Hill, where I spent some time doing a painting which afforded me great pleasure, and was also extraordinarily interesting from one incident at least. The point I had chosen was one where I got a fine view of Silbury Hill, which appeared rising in a mellow bath of warm light, the sun just then beginning to go down. There was yet a good spell of time for me to do my work, so I settled to it quietly. It became very evident to me as I painted that I should find trouble with the middle foreground.

To leave the turn of the road as it went downwards and became lost in the dense shadow of the woods intervening between me and the mellow hill beyond was quite impossible, yet how to manage a relief was not at all obvious. A man driving a cow or two passed along, and two or three girls on bicycles, as well as a flock of sheep, but nothing was just right. It is at a time like this that it becomes very evident that to attempt a bit of design is next to impossible, as such an invention would be sure to look tame and not right for the particular spot.

As usual under such conditions, I began to get irritated, and had almost given up hope that anything of interest would turn up, when the unexpected happened. A large tilt-cart turned the corner, and the light falling on its practically white covering gave me just the spot of light I was craving for. At once I got it in and very soon my labour ended. Now take one of my secrets and use it as well as possible. There was no washing out of my dark mass of shadow, or scraping either, for the cart was painted on a piece of clean paper left ready for the right tenant if it turned up. In this way it appears as though my friend the cart had been planned and thought of from the time I commenced the picture. I had settled where the group was to be, and that was all. I may be asked, "But what would happen if that tilt-cart had not turned up?" To which question I can only reply, that my picture would have been a failure.

It is not always that an object is so essential, but in this case it seemed to me to be so, and nothing else came in quite so aptly. I got comfortably to Devizes, where I found pleasant quarters, and having strained fresh paper, rested well, as a necessary preparation for my ride to Salisbury. Between Newbury and Devizes there is work for a long summer, or even the best part of a lifetime, only I was simply prospecting for a hunting-ground for a class. The next day was most beautiful, with masses of great fluffy clouds, for there had been rain in the night and the weather seemed breaking. I rode on happily enough, but saw nothing to bring me to a halt of sufficient attractiveness to turn to artistic account. It is the greatest mistake to imagine that demonstrative efforts can for ever be occupying the painter.

On this particular day the clouds were brilliant beyond words in their pure whiteness, and piled themselves up into the most gorgeous heaps of loveliness, and yet I did not want to paint them, but only to look and admire. And always let it be remembered that observing nature in its various conditions should be a highly important task for the student, and for the matter of that every other sane person. Apart from the great joy of it, values can be thought out and compared, as well as the arrangement of lines and the general plan of compositions. Drawing and painting is not only learned when the head is bent over drawing board or notebook, but also when the mind is busy making attentive observations and storing the brain with such knowledge. This cannot be too much insisted on, as training the mind to be continually on the alert is of infinite value. This habit of mental picture drawing and painting is fascinating beyond words, and when once it is acquired it is an ever-present joy. Every detail of picture making can be practised as the various aspects of a landscape pass under review.

The consideration of line, of values, and of colour, can all be weighed and decided on, and thus the whole time we are moving from place to place becomes one long period of work. This may seem a very simple way of getting a knowledge of the various truths of nature as exemplified in painting. But it was years before I fully grasped the advantage of mental drawing and painting. I was never told to try such practical observation, and so it only came to me very gradually. However, as soon as I had once grasped it I was never tired of comparing the value of various objects as they came across my vision. I got rather too intent

upon one occasion, and bicycled into a herd of cows, which cost me five shillings before I pacified the drover, as I had damaged the ear of one animal, and I was assured the nervous shock would check its milking faculty for a time. Although Sussex born I was London bred, so could not argue the point!

Many a time I have found so much to interest me in a knotty point of values that I have unpacked my traps and begun a practical analysis of a subject, which in itself afforded little to



Illus. XXIV. The Weald of Hampshire

interest a painter. The most beautiful spots I have ever seen have not owed their charm to composition or colour so much as to their subtle adjustment of values. I must get along or Salisbury Plain will never be traversed, to say nothing of the rest of this particular journey. I did paint one most interesting sky a few miles before I got to Stonehenge. It happened at this time that some sort of manœuvres were in progress, and this fact helped me to get materials for a subject. The sky had been charming me for some time, and the white road as it wound across the quietly

ILLUSTRATION XXV

WINCHESTER

WINCHESTER nestles very beautifully amongst the Hampshire Downs, and is seen to great advantage from many points a mile or two from the city. The great squat central tower, and the very long nave, make a charming picture in a drawing. The clouds obligingly helped me, and gave me the assistance I required to work out my conception. The heavy middle distance to the left is accounted for by the storm cloud over it, and the darks of the centre right were occasioned by a high overhanging cloud not seen in the picture. The foreground was very vacant. The cathedral, middle distance, far distance and sky fulfilled my idea. I felt that any attraction near to me would rather detract from than improve the general scheme. Again I warn the student to guard against the feeling that it is necessary to put details of interest all over his picture. A picture should have one great point of attraction, and all else should be subservient to it, and in no way challenge its chief claim. In a subject such as this, when a building is the chief feature, it is necessary to draw and paint the details with great care. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that no overdoing of particulars can be allowed, so as to make the masses of light and shade seem less. The sun shone on all the walls, and the lead roof very clearly showed its beautiful colour of a darker value, although by no means black. Note the bright sunny break in the sky, and the way in which the dark cloud against it acts as a complement to the dark right hand mass of foliage.



Illus. XXV

WINCHESTER

undulating land was very interesting. These points were not enough in themselves to satisfy me. However, as I was beginning to think my beautiful evening cloud sky would never be done, the right thing cropped up. The road in front of me took a turn which was the station point for a finger-post. And here were grouped two or three cavalry-men. It was all just right, and in a moment I was off my machine and was working at the group of figures, as they evidently marked the key of the position.

The sky was now full of joy, as the strong values of the figures were in fine relief against the clean brightness of the evening light. All went happily, as the figures did not seem in a hurry to be gone since they had managed to get something to drink which delayed them a little, and so gave me time to finish. The further ride into Salisbury was very pleasant, as the evening was clear after the cloudy day, and very hot. I do not know how heat affects other people, but to me, as the sun begins to get low, a very melancholy excitement comes, which also has in it a great feeling of pleasure. I think this feeling must be associated with the lovely colours which begin to wrap up nature as the night is coming on. At this time, if one has any imagination at all, a passionate sense of the charm of nature arises. I am very often so moved at sunset-time, and this evening the influence was very strong.

As I wheeled along I was aware of an unusual object on the horizon, and at once knew that Stonehenge was in front of me. The knowledge that this much known but never before seen place of mystery was near, increased my feeling of sadness. In truth, it had a most depressing effect, which I think I share in common with many others who have seen Stonehenge for the first time. There was apparently no one about. In fact, I had not met anyone for miles. All my feeling of interest, however, left me in a moment, as seeking an entrance through the barbed wire fence I came upon a policeman on duty, who politely demanded one shilling for admission. It was too much for my nerves; so I quickly mounted my machine and rode into Salisbury, meditating on the class of sightseer who made such a scheme as this necessary.

This city possesses much that is highly interesting, but my advice to the student is to leave the cathedral alone, so far as painting it is concerned. Constable and Turner can be well left with the glory of their achievements. As a distant object, of course, it comes grandly into the landscape, but as a near object the details are far too bewildering. I have never had sufficient

ILLUSTRATION XXVI

PORCHESTER CASTLE

INCIDENTALLY, Porchester Castle is one of the most extensive baronial buildings in England. What remains of it is full of interest to the antiquary, and for the artist it is full of many subjects of great charm. The keep is the part forming the principal feature of the drawing. The day I chose for my work was brilliantly sunny, a condition I had always hoped for whenever I might be fortunate enough to get an opportunity to paint this truly grand building. A bright unclouded sky made the sunny masonry of a near value to it, although here and there the bright whiteness of parts of the structure shone out with a sparkling brilliancy. I refer to the top right-hand corner of the keep, where such an incident comes in with marked effect. Burnt sienna was a colour I found very helpful, and of course greys of an infinite variety. With the greatest care I drew the whole subject, marking the details of crumbling stones, and also the brickwork repairs. The surface of the whole was broken up greatly, and formed a gay patchwork of stone of varied colour, red brick, ivy, as well as many wall-growing plants. These I painted in their local colours, and filled in as I worked the patches of deep tone as they occurred in window openings; the doorway to the right of the tower as well as the markings of the foreground details. I was particular when working on the lines of stone work in the sunny periods to work with a brush or pen well filled and allowed to settle on the paper full and wet. By this means I got a far more interesting result than if the colour had been used comparatively dry. In the drawing of the incidents in the shadow parts, I used my colour less liquid and darker. With a full brush I now flooded in the great shadow of the building, and also added the softer shade that occurred in the foreground. Note should be taken of the two figures passing by the keep: these help to break up the monotony of so large a shadow.



Illus. XXVI

PORCHESTER CASTLE

courage to try it, and do not suppose I ever shall. There are some very interesting old buildings here, which will give much amusement to the student who is keen on street work, but I will not go into details on this subject. I shall be coming to towns far more interesting from the old houses point of view later on. My road now took me across the Downs to Winchester.

There are happy things to be seen on these open plains of rolling low-lying hills, but nothing to call for particular attention till we get near Winchester. Here during stormy weather the cathedral can be seen grandly pictured. Dark woodland masses, associated with richly coloured downs, in the midst of which the stately lines of the cathedral add a beauty—and as complete a picture which to my knowledge has never yet been painted. Such a picture is not often seen, as the normal condition a few miles up the Downs is fine, but not superlatively so. It is the storm quality which is wanted, and rough cloudy weather is not always at hand. I have seen this view, as I have attempted to describe it, once only, and then I had not even the back of an envelope with me, and my memory was not as good then as it is now. Neither did I possess the experience which makes it possible to paint a thing a few hours after seeing it. It is this class of picture which is seen to such admiration over the whole of the southern counties.

The proximity to the English Channel occasions, without doubt, the gathering of great rain clouds, and these, if driven inland by west or south-west winds, break up in the hilly down country. At least, I have always found far more effects of this kind in the southward counties than I have in the Midlands or the east or north-east. I note this just as an item which interested me when I first observed it, and so I thought it might possibly interest others also. I have never seen finer effects of storm clouds than in the south of England.

From Winchester to Southampton a very pretty and interesting part of the country is passed through, which increases in beauty as the coast is approached. The character of the land the more east we go rises in bold downland, which in many parts becomes headlands, as at Portsdown Hills. Much work can be found here, where for many weeks I have from time to time painted with very great pleasure. The sea breaking into the land in irregular water-ways affords much that is interesting, with the added charm of shipping as the by no means least pleasing feature.

Portchester Castle is a grand and highly interesting building, which at one time I painted repeatedly.

The view of Portsmouth from Portsdown Hill should afford endless interest, and in looking northward the Weald of Sussex and Hampshire adds a variety of work to be dealt with. I generally found fine cloud effects when taking the town as the far middle distance, and further away bringing in the Isle of Wight. The Isle I have visited two or three times, but was never moved to work there, as I found it too restricted and, to my thinking, an unpleasant place. There always appeared to me to be plenty of other parts of England to paint without calling upon this rather "pretty-pretty" and wholly fashionable locality for subjects for brush or pencil. This is a very personal sentiment which must be taken as such, and the Isle of Wight should be painted if anyone finds it sufficiently attractive. In getting still further eastward the small towns and villages between Portsmouth and Chichester are fallen in with, but as later on I intend to deal with this district separately, I will at once get on to a part of England which I look upon as a very important workshop for the landscape painter.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

The Fens and Wolds of Lincolnshire

JOY is the only word I know which fully expressed my feeling as I approached this lovely county for the first time, as I travelled to it from London. For a first visit the weather was of a kind to produce joy. It was exactly Lincoln weather, and having said that I will explain what I mean. Broken weather was coming, but before the rain came down the atmosphere was clear underneath, whilst above the clouds romped in a perfect playground of cloudy beauty. The wonderful distances were seen in complete perfection. In one direction there were thirty or forty miles of uninterrupted country, and by simply turning round you found a like joy of vision waiting to be worshipped in the opposite direction. The beautiful clearness of the air rendered objects ten miles away extraordinarily distinct. The whole of this land of flatness abounds with objects of life and interest. There are great numbers of cattle and sheep, pumping mills, bridges, scattered groups of trees, and all other objects associated with a great agricultural district, which is also well supplied with rivers and great water-ways. Small water-ways there are of course in endless numbers, as the land is kept dry by continual pumping and has been kept so for nearly a thousand years.

There is, however, one thing lacking, and to my mind one thing only. Search the county of Lincolnshire from north to south and from east to west, and in it is found no stately abbey or priory to give a charm to the landscape, the reason for this being, that although Lincolnshire was one of the richest counties in England at the time of the Reformation, and abounded in great monastic institutions, they were in this particular spot doomed to utter extinction. In this county was hatched the rebellion to reinstate the "old religion" known as "the Pilgrimage of Grace." This outbreak gave such terrible umbrage to Henry VIII, that he issued

ILLUSTRATION XXVII

Old Windmill, Lincoln

THIS windmill is yet another subject that I painted at Lincoln, and tends to add another proof to what I have already said respecting this place as a happy hunting-ground for the artist and student. I was giving a lesson to rather a large class, and also myself painting. After very carefully drawing the mill-head and sweeps, I took a turn round to see how my students were getting on, and was rather astonished to find that all had finished their drawing, and were awaiting my inspection before beginning to paint. Needless to say, I had to make remarks that caused considerable depression of spirits; but when they had examined my work, it was quite evident to them all how much had been overlooked, and how necessary the parts were that had been missed or only lightly considered. It was a bright morning, and although the sky was full of fleeting clouds, their shadows had to be dealt with so as to retain a feeling of brilliancy in everything above the skyline. It was a good composition, that was much helped by the left-hand tower of another mill. This served as a complement to the large one, and helped to add much interest to the whole scheme. I mention this in order to show how many points should be considered when selecting a subject. The black and white fowls in the foreground assisted, too, by giving a twinkle to the whole. Notice the lessening values as the objects recede towards the left of the drawing; I often find this point receives very little attention, and yet it is one of great importance. I often advise this class of study, as there is much drawing in it which cannot be as easily passed over as is the case in an open landscape; but, be it remembered, there is equal drawing in everything, although in some subjects it is more subtle and more easily overlooked.



Illus. XXVII

An Old Windmill, Lincoln

a decree that this "land of vipers, this hotbed of sedition, which stunk in his nostrils, should not possess the remnants of a religious house, but that all should be utterly wiped out." And thus our county of queenly beauty is robbed of this great charm, and no artist in recording his wanderings in it can add to his fame by painting the rich beauties of Bardney, Thornton-le-Wold, Crowland, or a score of other abbeys and priories with which the county was adorned. It is true that, with the exception of a few single walls here and there, these buildings were cut clean to the ground, as though a scythe had been used to make complete their destruction.

But if for the work the painter has in hand the county fails in this respect, it is in truth its only shortcoming. All else is here in perfection, and the charm of Lincolnshire when once it has taken hold remains as a lasting impression on the mind. I was at once happy in the land I had come to, and on the evening of my arrival I did a drawing of a pumping mill on the River Witham. Woodhall Spa is a pleasant modern town, chiefly inhabited by the patients who go there to take the cure. It has, however, nothing else to recommend it, save that it makes a good centre for work. From it Lincoln and Boston can be visited with ease, as they are both on the direct railway line. Bardney is an interesting place about half-way to Lincoln, and between it and at the latter many fine views can be seen of the cathedral. I hesitate to attempt in words to give expression to my thoughts of this building. My drawings, I hope, do better than my pen; but as I feel I must say something about the places I painted, a record is here made. Certainly the day I bicycled from Woodhall, with the intention of working my way over to Lincoln, left nothing to be desired in the way of weather. It was beautifully cloudy, with an element of storm hanging about to give a blueness in the distance, and now and again a heaviness overhead which might turn to rain at any moment. I knew that I must get the far side of Bardney from Woodhall before I could get the cathedral to sit in my work where I required it.

The River Witham is a sluggish stream winding among the Fens, and constantly affording a pleasant foreground. It was at a turn in the river a few miles out of Lincoln that the cathedral assumed quite suddenly a beauty which I hope may ever remain with me as a treasured possession. The blue-clouded north-east was of a lovely cyanine, and against it, bathed in sunlight, the cathedral

ILLUSTRATION XXVIII

A Draining Mill, Lincolnshire

IN Lincolnshire there are many such draining mills as the one shown in the opposite drawing. These buildings are the modern representatives of the windmills of a hundred years ago, which were the delight of John Sell Cotman and his brethren. The mill tower, with the sweeps removed, has the addition of a tall chimney that indicates the employment of steam as the motive power instead of wind. A grey day with heavy cloud masses helped me to the greater part of my picture, and made the low-lying landscape, with a quiet far distance, a most restful and attractive subject. Usually these mills have a piece of cultivated land, so that the haystack or two grouped with the red-brick mill tower and chimney, and the house, make a pretty passage of colour in which the bright white of the cottage twinkles as a piece of interesting relief. Although a very interesting picture, the colours I used were few, the sky being entirely painted with ivory-black, cyanine and french blue. The distance was put in with pure cyanine and with french blue as the objects approached the middle distance. The foreground, of course, called for many more colours. In the buildings, haystacks and trees, I used light red, yellow ochre, brown-madder, burnt and raw sienna, and green oxide of chromium. A warm neutral colour for the near land I made with ivory-black and raw sienna, as the autumn was nearing and the land had lost the fresh green tones of summer. I remember that in painting the trees near the mill, I made a very satisfactory green of green oxide of chromium, raw sienna and ivory-black, working the tones so that the raw sienna prevailed in the lighter part, and the darker colours were added as I approached the shadowed period.



Illus. XXVIII

A Draining Mill, Lincolnshire

sat enthroned in stately majesty—a true "Queen of the Fens." The hill on which the city is built rises abruptly from the plain, and the cathedral makes a fitting completion to the mass of buildings which cluster round it. It is the wonderful clearness of the air in this district which affords such a charm and adds so much to its interest. It is in painting such a subject that the truth is brought home to me that, by direct method, and by it alone, can such a picture be achieved. This, my first impression of Lincoln, only got stronger as I became more acquainted with the beauties of the place, and had opportunities of again and again painting it. The city within its walls possesses many fine subjects for the painter, as its hilly streets often show the cathedral as the culminating point of interest in the composition.

The student with this introduction to Lincoln must work out the beauties of the place at his leisure, for space will not allow me to go into detail of the many points of interest I discovered in my wanderings in and about the city.

My next trip was to Boston, which lies about sixteen miles in the opposite direction from Woodhall. Very different were my feelings, as I came into this town, from those I had when I first saw Lincoln. Here there is no bold hill capped by a majestic cathedral, but the whole place is on flat land. The church is, however, very fine, and its tower forms a striking landmark for thirty miles in each direction. "Boston Stump," as it is called, is looked upon with much pride by the inhabitants, and is a grand example of what is known in Gothic architecture as a "truncated spire." This term of truncated means that it is a spire which is cut off about twenty or thirty feet after it leaves the tower from which it springs. The drawing of mine of Boston, which is here reproduced, shows clearly the appearance of the "Stump." There are several such towers in the west of England, but this is the finest I had ever seen.

I said that my feelings were different from those I had when first I saw Lincoln, but very soon much joy possessed me, as I had only changed one feast for another of an equally imperial character. The richness of the subjects which gather on the riverside is truly astounding, and filled me with a fierce desire for work. Very kind, too, are the Boston folks, who seem pleased that their town is being made the subject of pictures, and that its interests are so much appreciated. This feeling of being made at home and happy is a great point with me, as I am convinced that my best

ILLUSTRATION XXIX

On the Witham

SIMPLICITY is the keynote of this subject, and in the attempt to maintain this characteristic I experienced great difficulty, and found myself in much doubt, when I had completed the drawing, as to whether or no I had succeeded. The evening sky was serenely mellow, with light clouds warmed by the setting sun mixed with those of a silvery grey. My sky colour I made with yellow ochre, ivory-black, and light red: the shadow thrown by the light cloud, and the grey cloud mass, with french ultramarine, ivory-black, and rose-madder. The distant tree group I painted in cold blue grey, made of cyanine, light red, and a little ivory-black. For warm neutral greens, warming in tone as the foreground was neared, I used green oxide of chromium, burnt and raw sienna, ivory-black, yellow ochre, and naples yellow. The light on the river I found by leaving the paper, which was slightly toned, untouched. For the cattle I used my usual colours for such objects to which I have drawn attention elsewhere. Such a simple subject as this is most helpful for a student to paint, as the drawing is very easily dealt with.



Illus. XXIX

On the Witham

work has been done in those places where I feel joyful and contented.

The river runs through the town, and on either side the banks are built up with stone and brick, and held together with great baulks of timber. I think the rise and fall of the tide must be twenty feet at least, or so it appeared to me, and that is good enough for descriptive purposes. All the details of landing-stages, warehouses, the loading and unloading of vessels, afforded endless pleasure to me as I wandered through the town and made fresh discoveries at every turn. I had never seen a place of such interest in its particular way, and reflected lovingly on the work in store for my brush and pencil. From many parts of the town I found the " Stump " forming a fine interest as it rose above the neighbouring buildings. I spent a week working here, and then determined to investigate the water-way which runs out of Lincoln to the north-west. This is the Gainsborough Canal, which I found full of interest, as it is much used by certain barges which carry a large square sail, and form admirable subjects for painting. The foregrounds which this barge traffic affords interested me greatly, and in the distance Lincoln, with its towers, constantly made a happy incident.

In my search for subject matter, few localities have helped me more than the neighbourhood of a canal. There is always so much busy, active life on such a water-way that subjects from which to make a foreground are plentiful.

The question of a canal as a field for work being under consideration, I think it as well to mention another which has often afforded a theme for my brush. The canal I refer to is the Grand Junction, and the locality in which I worked was in the neighbourhood of Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire. I make this note as the place is very interesting, and no further reference can be made to it by me, as it does not come into any of the localities I mention in this book (p. 114). The time I spent on the Gainsborough Canal was very profitable, as it introduced me to this class of work. It is of a character very different from that which is found on a broad river like the Medway at Rochester or even the Thames at Oxford. In fact, it awakened in me such an interest in canal life, that I hope to be able to charter a barge at some future time and live the life of a bargee for a spell. Such a trip would be free beyond words, and possess also an element of charming simplicity. Should these words awake in anyone a desire to put the idea into practice, I

ILLUSTRATION XXX

Boston Stump

THIS picture I selected as an example of a sky without detail. The paper used was a low-toned "David Cox," and all above the skyline was left entirely untouched. This piece of work was painted in Lincolnshire, my favourite county, and is of Boston Stump. There is not much to be said about this drawing, but I introduce it among the illustrations to show that a satisfactory effect can be gained without sky—or represented only by the tone of the paper. The trees to the right are a very useful feature in the composition, as in common with the large single tree to the extreme right hand, they help to balance the dark bridge and near bank on the left. Note that the light reach of the river is complemented by the light cattle, and the lit-up land beyond the dark right-hand trees. This picture I entirely outlined with pen, and then flooded the colours in; this is sometimes satisfactory, especially where architectural features are introduced.



Illus. XXX

Boston Stump

conjure him by the gods to "gang warily." I mean that he must carefully see to the cleansing and fumigating of any craft he gets hold of, else there will be a terrible awakening. I could be more forcible and say there would be no awakening, from the simple fact there would have been no going to sleep. I have found much distress when painting in the neighbourhood of barges from the attention of certain active little creatures who attach themselves to the navigators of these craft and their families. Apart from this, I cannot conceive a more pleasant picnic-time than might be spent in such a way. It certainly would be inexpensive for a small party and give time for uninterrupted work as well. There is always the halting-time when barges are being locked and unlocked, for work to be done more or less quietly.

The process of getting a barge through a lock is not long, but it is enough if the worker is alert and employs his time well. As a detail of the subjects found on a canal, I would mention the different parts of a lock itself. The drawing of such a thing is highly interesting, and I have spent much time and found great pleasure in such a subject. The student must be fully prepared for difficulties, and certainly in the drawing of a lock he will find a good wholesome meal.

I did not follow this canal many miles out of Lincoln, but the part of it I did paint afforded me many days' work, and it was only lack of time which prevented my seeing more of it. Enough has been said, however, to show the student the class of work in this outlying district of Lincoln, and how admirable it is.

My next expedition led me on to the Wolds—those rising lands, which in the old days were rough and uncultivated, not unlike the wildest of our southern heaths or commons. They are now being put under cultivation, but their general appearance is wild enough.

There are many interesting places within easy distance of Lincoln, Boston, or Woodhall, where the student will find much to interest him and repay the trouble of a visit. It is, however, my object to give a general idea of the district under consideration and in no way to attempt to make a guide to it. I could write much more about the beauties of Lincolnshire, but having introduced the student to it, and given my reasons for thinking so well of it as a country for the landscape painter, I must leave it for his own investigation.

ILLUSTRATION XXXI

Lock Gates, Rickmansworth

THIS picture can very properly be called a water-colour drawing, as it is worked out in pen-line and then lightly tinted. The student can find no better task on which to devote his energies than a subject of this kind. I found great delight in doing it, and I can promise all those who set themselves a like study an equal amount of pleasure. The lines of a lock, with its great timbers and machinery, supply an infinite variety of subtle difficulties that must be overcome before a good result can be obtained. Nothing should be shirked or glossed over. I would draw attention to the dark shadow under the right-hand trees and to the " darks " between the lock gates as an example of what I have before referred to as a " complement " in a picture. The shadow under the trees, if it had been alone, would have appeared a spot of " dark " in the drawing, but as it is repeated in the dark parts to the left, and again, in a lesser degree, in the window and chimney-stacks of the cottage, there is in the work no special " dark " to distract attention, though all the points of emphasis are distributed harmoniously. I do not care much about such expressions as harmonies, nocturnes, etc., when I am talking of my own work; but occasionally they are useful, as in this case. The student will not have to wander over the country in order to get a canal or river lock when he wants a subject of this kind, as they can be found without difficulty.



Illus. XXXI

Lock Gates, Rickmansworth

CHAPTER XIV

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Richmond and Swaledale, Yorkshire

FROM Lincolnshire to this part of Yorkshire is a great change indeed, but it is only from one kind of beauty to another. Nothing could be in greater contrast than the deep and slowly running Witham and the Swale swiftly moving down from the moors through its rocks and boulders, and ready after a few hours of rain to be changed into a roaring torrent. My delight was great when I just wandered about Richmond selecting likely spots for work. It was a very new world to me, and one which gave promise of happy hours to come. After-events proved my forecast to have been correct. The student will find here a supply of subjects which will test his draughtsmanship severely. One of the first things I did was the general view of the town from the terrace. This is a well-known subject. It is very fine in many lights, but my choice was when the sun was sinking and the town was pulled together in the neutral light of evening, with the moors backing all in the waning sunlight.

It is a great change from such a subject as this to go down by the river and paint the castle from the other side of the bridge. I never tired of working at this view, and always found something new in it to fascinate me. Numerous compositions can be got in the length of a few hundred yards along the riverside. I heard many complaints about the children at this spot, but personally had very little difficulty with them. A pupil of mine was much horrified when informed by one little creature that she, the child, was a "germ carrier." Of course, such a piece of news was likely to create a bit of a flutter, but beyond this I never heard of any serious annoyance to anyone. To me the little creatures dancing and paddling about among the rocks in a state of nakedness was very charming, and afforded no cause for those complaints which others saw fit to make. It is marvellous how dense some people

are to a really lovely thing. I have repeatedly heard groups of little things who were sporting in the water and enjoying themselves beyond words referred to as ugly little brats.

Through the woods which here rise very grandly from the river a path can be found, at the end of which a fine view of the castle and town is seen, with a glimpse of river and bridge. Those students who like street and building work will find here much to interest them, but the locality is chiefly fine in other subjects. From the field-path to Easby Abbey, the Barracks, Race-course, the West Fields, much will be found which will provide work for the painter. There is no lack of subjects in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, and the country for many miles is full of fine things. Middleham Castle, Bolton Castle, Wensley Dale in one direction and Greta Bridge and Catwick in the other, all afford endless joy to those who are looking for the beautiful in nature.

I have undertaken three painting trips to Richmond, each of which was productive of much work, and I hope that I may still have many opportunities of painting there in the future. Before moving on to another place, I should like to say a word or two about the old bridge and its many interesting points as a subject for study. I made it the subject of a great many lessons, as well as painting it several times myself. The bridge itself, as it occupies the right-hand foreground, varies continually during the day. The same may be said of any other object in nature, only in this case the changing light makes very interesting effects. In the morning, about nine o'clock, the bridge, backed by the castle when you are facing it, appears in shadow. This, reflected in the stream, has a most fascinating effect, and tends to produce a well-balanced composition. As the sun draws round, bridge, castle, everything is in sunlight, and then, to me, the thing is at its best. I painted the scene in such a condition once, and found it a most charming task. All the details of the mass of buildings showed distinctly, and the whole thing, when worked out as I did it, appeared most elaborate.

In this case, I made the drawing in pen and colour and tinted it with light washes for the local colours. It was very interesting, and I would recommend such a study to any student visiting the place. In stormy weather the bridge and castle shine bright in the morning light, with a dark north-east background of clouds which are often intensely blue. Nearly every stretch of fifty

yards to the west of the bridge presents a new composition, each of which in its turn has afforded me much pleasure to do. I have not known any subject which has given me so much employment for my brush as this one. I do not wish it to be inferred from this remark that it is a thing finer than others, but I do look upon it as being full of interest and variety.

As I am on this subject, which has always appeared so full of beauty, I feel compelled to say how seldom I have seen justice done to its attractions. I may speak more strongly than this, and condemn heartily the many hideous productions which have masqueraded under the title of Richmond Castle and Bridge. However, it is not my object adversely to criticize the works of others. From the gasworks side the bridge in the morning light is very fine, and affords most interesting work. This can be painted from either bank, as the composing qualities at this point are so good that subjects are readily found for study. I have dwelt at some length on the possibilities of this theme, as I am convinced of the advantage to be gained by the student if full attention is paid to it. Not only is the drawing complicated, but the local colour is most attractive.

When working in a district of this kind where there are many ruins of castles, abbeys, and other ancient buildings, I have found great advantage in keeping the pen fully employed. Not only does it keep the mind alert and careful when dealing with such an arbitrary thing as a building is, but it also gives a very sympathetic line indicative of crumbling stonework. I have seen a drawing of Fountains Abbey, where the delicate beauty of the architectural details has been sought to be obtained by a medium which looked very much like charcoal. Many have found the greatest pleasure in the use of the pen when dealing with ruined buildings, and many more will continue to do so. I make it a practice of filling my pen with colour to suit the local tone of the building which is being drawn. The pen can be of any kind just to suit the taste; I have used indifferently sharp and broad nibs, and liked them equally.

If the student wants help in this class of work, he cannot do better than seek out and make himself acquainted with the pen drawings of Thomas Girtin and Paul Sandby. I shall have much to say about these men, but I thought a reference to them would come well just at this point. Anyone with a liking for pen work could happily spend a year in Richmond and its neighbourhood,

and, strange as it may sound, do his water-colour knowledge much good by such a sojourn. It must be always borne in mind that it is the use of the point which proclaims the draughtsman, whether it be that of the pen, pencil, or brush. The introduction of strong lines to emphasize the construction of the masses is most useful. It gives a force which is only limited by the range of the painter's knowledge. This little digression on technical points might possibly have come where method was considered, but it seems to fit in comfortably here. I felt sure before I began recounting my wanderings that I could not help breaking off and considering every question connected with my work. I could now get back to Richmond and begin again considering that happy hunting-ground, but other fields call me to give my experiences of their beauties.

CHAPTER XV

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Shropshire

TO paint and describe the beauties of this county a lifetime would be required, and as I have only a bit of one to devote to the subject it is an impression only that I give. If, however, I can convey but slightly all the pleasure I had during my wanderings there, this part of my journey will afford me every satisfaction. From all I have since known of the county, I think my going to Shrewsbury first was quite the right thing to do. There was an added charm as well, in the fact that I was looking after a water-colour class at a house in this neighbourhood. I do not know why it is, but if I am happy in my surroundings then my work goes as well as it possibly can, and vice versa. Truly in this instance I was very happy, my lessons giving me much pleasure. I here met the granddaughter of a pupil of Peter de Wint, and had the advantage of working on paper from an old store of this lady. It was in excellent state, not being in the least mildewed. There were charming drawings to be got from this house, which stood on rising ground above the Severn. Keen interest was shown by my pupils in their work, so that my own labours were light and pleasant in consequence. A great variety of subjects makes this country a good one for the student. The farmsteads and objects associated with such buildings are of a type which make excellent studies for all who seek simple compositions. In many places the churches are interesting and form good subjects to draw. Even when little more is to be got save one of these farmsteads, there is yet enough in it to afford excellent work for pencil and brush. A decidedly fine feature of the landscape here is the river, which is a continual help in the picture. Coming either into the foreground or middle distance, it is a thing of rare beauty.

Distant about three miles from Shrewsbury are the fine ruins of Harghmond Abbey. The rich meadows which surround it and stretch down to the river are the feeding-ground for fine herds of cattle which to me are always a happy sight as affording helps in my foregrounds. A fine point from which are seen the spires of the town, is got from near the river-bank here. Shrewsbury from underneath its graceful spires nestles close by, with its clustering red brick buildings and tiled roofs. The distant cool blue hills complete a picture sweet in its charming simplicity. The dear kindly English scenery is nowhere found to greater perfection than on this Welsh borderland. When I executed the painting from this spot, its quality as a national type suggested itself to me very strongly. The pleasant emotions which moved me had their origin in many things. The wholesome herds of cattle, the rich meadows, the town rising from this wealth of land, and beyond, the low-lying range of hills, all seemed to tell a tale of England. After spending a week or two here, I began to feel how great an influence the soothing nature of the place had upon me.

Keeping strictly to my rule when teaching of only giving one three-hour lesson daily, I found ample time for my own work. Early evening is always a favourite time for me to begin painting. In my experience the only drawback to this time of day is the falling dew, which hinders the paint from drying. No better plan can be found when this is the case than to leave a line of dry paper between the colour masses. Great care must be taken to keep the colours separate, as explained in an earlier chapter. Much advantage is found when working towards the evening from the fact that the masses of the landscape become more distinct as the details fade out of view. I do not suggest this time, therefore, to young students, as it is apt to lead to carelessness. To the more experienced, who are able to generalize and suggest with greater knowledge, the evening is a very attractive time to paint. To all I would say, beware of that most hideous colour—purple. At any time this colour is likely to be a dangerous stumbling-block, but it is never so insinuating as at sunset.

Amongst the many pretty trips I have taken round Shrewsbury, none comes back with more pleasurable associations than the one I took to Wenlock Abbey. Much Wenlock is the town to steer for, and once you have arrived there, the way to the Abbey is simple. The building is one of the few monastic institutions of which a part is now used as a private residence. At the time when I

painted the place it was occupied by The Rt. Honble. James Gaskell, who kindly afforded me every facility for pursuing my work in comfort. The day I was at Wenlock was most delightfully sunny, and the ruins were full of light. The colour of the stone of which the Abbey is built is very warm and the shadows were of a beautiful coolness. I was only sorry that time did not allow me to work for a week amongst such lovely surroundings. Certainly there would have been no lack of subjects of great delight to employ my brush.

After another week or so, during which time I employed myself with work in the town itself, I returned to London. Having found much interesting material in Shrewsbury, it was not long before Shropshire saw me again, Ludlow being this time my headquarters. This town and neighbourhood should find much favour with students, as the work to be found within its borders is of great variety. Those who know the place must skip these pages, as I shall give my experiences very fully, that is as far as drawing and painting are concerned, with a little picture-seeing thrown in. I began with the castle, which is a very fine building of many parts and large proportions. It has become such a traditional habit to draw and paint buildings in a manner bereft of all sentiment, that I shall try and show the existence of other possibilities in them.

There is no valid reason why such subjects should not be full of great quality. I used to be very sick as a young man with the palsied things I used to see in the so-called great exhibitions. To be fed on such stuff is enough to create the worst ideas as to the possibilities of this class of work. Fortunately I have felt the charm of Bosboom's work, and now latterly that of James Pryde. I cannot too strongly urge upon the student the great advantage of studying the work of both these men when he is engaged upon the theme I am now talking about. Their work shows the sparkle of the heavenly thing, and how marvellously the simple object can be dressed fit for the company of the gods.

Ludlow Castle is a building of such size and so many parts that it is well adapted to furnish material for pictures. When in strong sunlight, the shadow masses have a most striking effect. The massive masonry and deepset window openings give that stately grandeur which I find so attractive in Norman buildings. Here I have spent many a happy day, and I hope that many will find the opportunity of doing likewise. Apart from the castle

there are a few near objects which may afford interest, but about these I do not think it worth while to go into detail. The cliff rising from the river on the opposite side from the town affords a fine vantage ground from which to see the town, castle, and the two bridges.

The old bridge is very fine. From the cliff it is the centre object of many fine features, especially when the weather is stormy, the distant hills making a grand skyline, and the intervening material in the composition teeming with interest. From the castle ramparts another interesting series of views can readily be seen, which should afford the student much amusement. I use the word amusement in its newer sense—to mean a twinkling interest, and much that is charming.

The surrounding country is full of work for the painter, and contains much that I had no time to explore, as after all my stay at Ludlow was short. I had every opportunity, however, thanks to the car which one of my pupils possessed, of getting about the neighbourhood pretty freely and of making myself acquainted with its chief characteristics. I also had an opportunity when in this locality of letting my pupils know what I thought about the relationship of photography to Art. The question arose quite accidentally, in fact quite as casually as the subject has crept into this chapter.

As photography has often been quoted to me as a great help to the landscape painter, I will express my views about it. My Ludlow pupil and his camera shall be the whipping-post. It happened that I was looking at a drawing which included a part of the river where cattle often came to drink. This study was the work of the photographer in question. In looking at the drawing, I remarked that much interest would have been added by the presence of a group of cows. The camera was at once suggested as supplying the means of getting the group wanted. The opportunity was a good one, and enabled me to chat a while to those who happened to be present, and to explain my views.

The use of photography as a help to the landscape painter is entirely pernicious, the reason being that a thing which is purely mechanical can only injure by its presence that which should be entirely emotional. Granted that only the shapes of objects are used in a picture, the influence of this mechanism is incorporated in the work, and its presence can be detected by the critical. However carefully a piece of photography is copied, in order to make

it look like a thing taken direct from nature, the hardness remains and the mechanical quality is felt. I have never found any difficulty in detecting where details have been copied from photographic studies. Objects in nature are often merely so suggestive, that excessive detail, which is sure to follow the use of photography, destroys such suggestion. I have thought much about this subject, and the conclusion I have come to is that any help from this source is bad from beginning to end. And being bad, the effect on the work of all those who use photography will be bad also.

Photography has played its great and useful work in Art, and has been of infinite advantage to the artist. By its means a reproduction of a great drawing is provided for a few pence or a shilling or two which might otherwise cost hundreds of pounds, and so be beyond the reach of any but the very wealthy. In the enlargement of designs it is useful beyond words, whilst in book illustrating its effect has been a complete revolution of the art. But granting all this to photography, and much more which I have not enumerated, it can never be a help to the landscape painter but entirely the reverse. Now having relieved my mind on this subject, I will get back to Ludlow and paint one more picture before I leave its lovely hills and vales and trudge off to a very different kind of country.

One stormy afternoon I had been wandering about seeking a subject to paint but finding nothing to suit my particular fancy of the moment, when my attention was suddenly arrested. I was on the brow of the cliffs overlooking the river and town. A heavy cloud mass was overhead, and under it the distant hills were lit up with a beautiful pearly warmth, the town with its castle and trees being richly sombre in the middle distance. On the cliffs—the top of which formed my foreground—were gathered a little group of children, whose bright attire just caught the last rays of the setting sun, and was in brilliant relief against the dark castle and woody middle distance. This group occupied the left middle of my picture, and was the key of the situation. I worked very quickly and was able to finish completely before either the sky effect altered or the children had gone.

I describe this picture in order to show the beginner that every one will again and again experience great difficulty in finding a subject, and that such a quandary should not cause discouragement. I want to give a fair idea of my painting localities, but

necessarily many a happy hunting-ground must be left without comment. I hope, however, that in what I have said as to the character of places where inspirations may be found, a helping hand has been given to the student of landscape painting.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Rye and Winchelsea
With a part of the Coast of Kent and Sussex

IT has been my very happy lot to possess a faculty for teaching, and further, to have found pupils who have been very helpful to me in my work. I know among my friends many who find much worry in their effort to impart knowledge to others. Not that such men have fallen short of being most excellent teachers, but the fact remains that to them instructing has been a bore, and has only been resorted to under more or less compulsion. Possibly my rule of only devoting a limited part of my time to the helping of others may have been the cause of my never having found it irksome. The fact, however, remains that teaching is to me a joy, and whilst occupied with quite hard work of this kind, I have found time to do very happy pictures.

Seldom have I found a pupil who has really been troublesome, although of course I have had to teach those who should have devoted their energies to anything rather than pictorial art. The sweetest of my memories are associated with my pupils. Many a learner has come and gone from my life after a short course of lessons, leaving with me the happiest impression.

In one or two instances I have met such a pupil after many years, and it has seemed as though time had not been, so strong can a mutual interest be. I say these few words about my love of teaching because it was at Rye that I spent my first fortnight with a class to whom I was giving help with their labours in water-colour painting from nature. I had been to the place a few years previously with my wife, before I had taken up water-colour work seriously. During this trip I had painted, and found so much to interest me, that when I had to decide upon a place for my first class, I selected Rye.

Before I begin to talk about the beauties I found here to employ

pencil and brush, I should like to say a word or two on a popular fallacy. I refer to the often expressed opinion that such and such a place had been so often painted that its interest has become exhausted. Now this is a terrible error, as every one sees with their own eyes, and no two people see alike. If two artists of quality paint a subject from the same standpoint, the result is two absolutely different pictures. The same object is looked at, but the resultant picture is the emotion of the individual, and no two brains think alike. Thus Rye may have been often painted, as no doubt it has, but the student visiting the place for the first time is going to translate it in his own way, and it only remains for him to see that his rendering is a good and interesting one.

It is a very worrying idea this seeking for fresh fields, so it is far better to think that no one has ever painted them before. I always feel quite happy and assured that my eyes and my brain have never been used by any one else, and therefore the result is going to be my own entirely.

Now having settled the point that Rye is a very hackneyed place, I will get on with telling its beauties. One more word I will say, and that is, that of all the places I know, never has one had its beauties so much abused by bad work as this delightful spot. Bad is a poor tame word to call the stuff which I have seen labelled Rye—views of or views in or views near. Approach the old town from Winchelsea on a summer evening, and there is something to be seen which will repay you. But this very simple-looking silhouette of the town, capped with its charming old church, is not going to be depicted easily. Do it again and again, and still it eludes your grasp, and the student knows, with sighs, that his drawing is wrong, his colour is bad, and that "Rye from the Winchelsea road on a summer's evening" still remains to be conquered.

Rye is one of those towns from which the sea has receded, leaving it high and dry about two miles inland. In the time of the Plantagenets its walls were sea-washed, and many a rough experience it had at the hands of both French and Spanish. Between the town and coast there lies a flat land, called The Saltings, from which the place can be seen to great advantage. Small craft can get up the river (Rother), and these vessels give an added interest to this locality of many charms. The town being built on a bold bluff of land, it is full of narrow streets paved with cobbles, and thus provides for the student of such

views many charming subjects. Mermaid Street is particularly beautiful, and has afforded me much pleasure in past days. To one visiting the place for the first time, a month of hard work will do little more than show how much there is to be done, and how readily subjects are to hand.

I found my chief source of interest in working round the town, and keeping it as the chief object, either in the middle or far distance. From this remark it must not be inferred that quite near views are to be lightly passed by. I have had many a delightful time when painting by the river and quite near the walls.

The old gates are another source of interest, which should certainly be made the subject of drawings. I have painted the Ypres gate more than once; in fact, I think that seven times is more accurate. The church tower, standing at the head of one of the narrow streets, makes a very fine subject, especially if the time of day is well chosen. If wet weather happens to intrude itself, the church provides many very fine subjects, as it is large and full of interest.

As a suggestion, which I would recommend, it would be wise to try and get access to the church tower, as from its upper windows some fine views might be got. If my steps were ever again directed to Rye, I should most certainly prospect this vantage ground with good hopes of finding much to interest me. Incidentally, I may remark that much golf is played here, as the links seem to be most attractive. I am not a golf player, but I know that most artists are fond of innocent sport. Art work is, or should be, a great drain on the nervous system, and outdoor active exercise acts as a very salutary corrective. The air of Rye is also very good, and the place is pleasant to live in for a time. I have always found, when working in this neighbourhood, that Rye is the best place to make one's headquarters. From it Winchelsea can be easily worked, as well as Pevensey and Romney. Winchelsea church is merely a fragment of one of the finest ecclesiastical buildings in England, and makes a fine drawing from several points.

Few remains of the town exist, as it was repeatedly sacked and burnt during Plantagenet times by French and Spanish, and after one of these burnings it was apparently never rebuilt. The old gate on the Hastings road is very charming, and is well worth looking at The flat marsh country towards Pevensey is of the

ILLUSTRATION XXXII

CHATHAM

THIS picture of Chatham I painted from the high land above Rochester. The day was full of passing showers, very grey and very sultry. The strong spring sun, as it showed itself between the clouds, lit up with a startling brilliancy the water-ways that appear in the middle distance. I did not find any need to use a pencil, but began at once to paint in the light clouds occupying the top centre of the sky. These clouds I painted, as far as their shadows were concerned, with a thin transparent wash of ivory-black, as its quiet warmth was suited to that part of the sky nearest to the source of light. As my work led me farther from the lit-up sky my greys became colder, and these I obtained by adding french blue and cyanine with here and there a very little rose-madder or indian red, especially as the horizon was being dealt with. The distant hills were painted with cyanine, and the line of darker hills nearer to the middle distance I managed with french blue, ivory-black, and a small addition of rose-madder or indian red. Great care was taken to get the proportion of these colours exactly, so as to ensure a rich cool grey. With the middle distance, where there is a suggestion of shipping and town buildings, warmer colours were used, which included light red, burnt sienna, and yellow ochre. All such colours were used with care, in order to avoid bringing that part of the picture too far forward. The dark trees to the right balance the shadowed middle distance to the left, and the dark left-hand foreground also. The colours used in painting the foreground were the blues I have mentioned, ivory-black, burnt and raw sienna, yellow ochre, and green oxide of chromium. I painted the picture on a slightly toned paper, leaving the light clouds and the water without any addition of colour.



Illus. XXXII

CHATHAM

kind which should be called "painters' land," as it affords a fine spacious clear land, and the skies in cloudy weather are ever full of joy. Let the student come here for the study of cattle groups, as no better place can be found in England for such subjects. I believe the Romney and Pevensey marshes afford pasture for eighty or a hundred thousand head of cattle. And here the variety of colour in the beasts is most beautiful, being quite different from the monotonous black and white of the Dutch cattle.

I cannot insist too strongly on the necessity for studying very closely cattle groups in an open landscape. No time is wasted that is devoted to such work. In time the student becomes so used to the appearance of distant groups, that his cattle, however small, become real things. This capacity is the outcome of knowing exactly the drawing of the objects represented, and being able to seize on the essential parts, which become only spots when the groups drawn are very distant. I spent much time in this study, and always found it most edifying. Quite large studies should be made of all kinds of cattle, as it must be borne in mind, that unless one can do a good drawing of a cow or a sheep, showing its construction correctly, it will never be possible to do the same object in the distance, where only the essentials are observable.

The more landscape work is pursued, the more it becomes evident that an exact knowledge of the object depicted must be mastered in all its details. And then, when this exact knowledge is gained, the picture painted must be suggestive only of such cognizance. Witness the beautiful truthfulness in the tiny cattle groups of Peter de Wint, yet who can doubt that these spots of colour are living and moving creatures. The more these marshes of Romney and Pevensey are wandered over the more they teem with infinite interest. The skies here, when clouds are about, are a constant joy, and they are none the less pregnant with beauty in the evening of a clear hot summer day.

The drowsy mists creeping slowly over these marshy lands when the heat of day has gone give an air of mystery and charm which can only be painted (now and then), as there are no words to express its beauty. I think this land of the marshes is more thoroughly the landscape painter's than any other. The low-lying land, the great expanse of sky, a few farm buildings and a group of middle distance cattle, and we have a picture simple in theme, but which can be possibly made a thing of infinite quality

and charm. I must write a little about these old farm buildings, as no better are found than those which abound in the southern counties. I think without doubt Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Dorsetshire and Wiltshire are pre-eminently the counties of the old farmstead and the old farm buildings. I have travelled so much about England, especially the south, mid and east, that I can speak with authority when I say this. Of course there is plenty of corrugated iron coming into existence, and this stuff is not half bad if the time of day is well chosen and the silhouette good.

This question of farm buildings found its way in very well here, so I cannot do better than say a few more words on the subject and give an illustration or two. Where farm buildings exist there are almost certain to be beasts about, and where there are beasts there will probably be men and possibly women, so there is life and activity, and subjects for the painter. It is infinitely better for the student to sit down and paint or draw a good farm-yard than a village street, even if there is a church at the end of it. To begin with, he will find greater difficulties in the former, and less convention. I have seen students looking so wretchedly miserable when a village street and a church tower have been the subject under consideration, that I never suggest such a piece of work willingly. I have never seen such feeble art efforts as the paintings of village streets and churches. I just mention this piece of experience in order to try and prevent any more being done, unless it is a superlatively fine village with church and all else in keeping.

The first thing I do when looking round a neighbourhood is to inspect the farm premises, and when doing so I am certain to find something of great interest. Few people know how extraordinarily fine many of the barns in an English farm are. The woodwork is often of a most elaborate kind, and was possibly built two hundred and fifty or three hundred years since. As an added interest, I may mention that many a barn is built of old ships' timbers, which can be seen by the bolt-holes and other marks of ship construction.

To break away for a little from the country I am now trying to picture, I would refer to the many highly interesting farm buildings I have found in Buckinghamshire. Amersham is very rich in them, and other towns and villages on the Chiltern Hills equally so. I put in this note as this county does not come into

my little world where work is to be generally looked for, so I will get back to Sussex again.

In this county I have found more evidences of a bygone time than elsewhere. The smock-frock, the shepherd's crook, and the flail for threshing, still linger in some of the villages in Sussex. Old country dames still use the pattens and the clogs, and until quite lately teams of black oxen did the arduous draft work of the hilly farms of the South Downs. I do get a bit away from my last, as at present, but my excuse must be that I have always found handbooks on Art so deadly dull, that I want to brighten this volume if I possibly can.

The stockyards are another very interesting part of the farmstead. In them groups of cattle can be quietly studied and the leaves of notebooks filled with work of the most useful kind. The colour in many of these delightful groups of buildings is often very rich, and when the brightness of a few beasts is added, the picture becomes very complete. The pig is another denizen of the farmyard which provides a most interesting subject. I have always had an affection for these creatures, finding the drawing of them difficult but most entertaining. Change of work I always find most helpful, and the greater the change the better. Employ the morning in making studies in a farmyard, and the maximum of zest will be felt for the open landscape which is dealt with in the latter part of the day.

Every effort should be made to ensure the greatest possible interest being taken in all work attempted. As soon as subjects cease to be taken in hand with keenness, then bad work must inevitably result. It is better for the student to wander about all day and end with doing nothing than to attempt a subject in which he feels no enthusiasm. I have always made it my rule only to do a thing I felt real pleasure in attempting. Should I have been wandering about for a whole morning, and then hit on something which has pleased me about lunch time, then lunch was forgotten and the work got on with. Therefore it is bad to stay with friends when you are painting, unless you are allowed to do exactly as you think fit. So many of my friends are alive to my peculiarity in this respect, that I find little difficulty when visiting. This little piece of moralizing can be the finish of our chapter on Rye, Winchelsea, and the Sussex Marshes, which district I hope has the pleasure in store for others which it has always afforded me.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Corfe Castle and its Neighbourhood

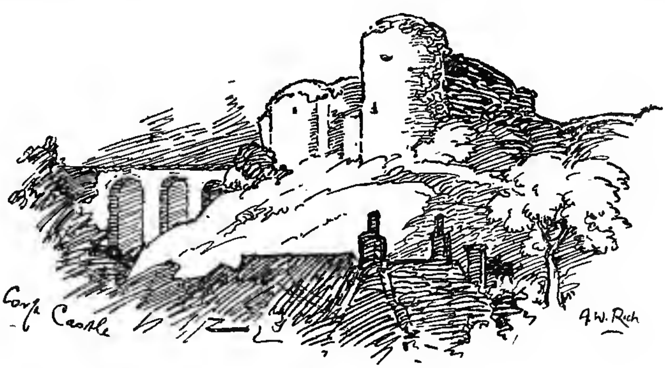
VERY different, but full of charm equal in its particular way to that of Sussex, is this lovely Dorsetshire village. The ruins of the castle dominate the whole place and supply the one great interest. Compared with Richmond or Ludlow, it stands out boldly in contrast to both. The great fortresses of the north and west have many features in common, but Corfe is only like itself. There is a bareness and loneliness about these ruins which have a charm peculiarly their own.

I was most interested with the place when first I saw it, and began to work an hour or so after I arrived. There is no fear of the most fastidious student failing to find work here, as the place simply teems with subjects. I will not attempt to point out where the pictures are best found, as it is far better to leave this place to the individual mind. I think if everyone went to Corfe, without any knowledge of work that had been previously done, they would select subjects entirely their own. I was particularly impressed with the loneliness of the ruin, especially when seen a mile or two from the village. When seen from such a point it is most impressive and solemn. Most places are constantly varying as the sky changes from sunlight to cloud, but I have never seen anything assume so many phases as does Corfe Castle. With the exception of the large painting by Wilson Steer now in the Public Gallery, Johannesburg, I know of no really good picture of the place. It remains, therefore, a place still to be won.

I found the greatest charm in some of the near views, especially where it is associated with a large mass of trees. This point appealed to me especially towards sunset. At such a time the building is most brilliant, as the stones of which it is constructed are most luminous, and of a lovely colour. I will here say that

the painting of the village street is justified, as the castle seen from the street near the church is a very charming object, especially in the early twilight. I have tried it once or twice but without success, and shall make another attempt if my steps take me again to this place.

Seen in such a light, the church and street are in deep shadow, and, beyond, the castle looms in a mellow mass against the sky, and has a most sweet silhouette. There are probably dozens of such ways of seeing the place, but this was the only one of its kind I came across, and it was most beautiful. The castle can be well seen from the neighbourhood of Poole Harbour, but



Illus. XXXIII. Corfe Castle

this is distant, and only shows it as a small thing. It is well worth looking at it from this point, however, as there is much rough heathery country between Corfe and Poole Harbour, rich in colour, and producing fine foregrounds. This same kind of country also lies on the road to Wareham, and many views can be seen to the eastward. I remember very vividly these impressions, and hope that I shall again have the pleasure of working in such charming country. This richness of colour I speak about is very marked in this locality, and I think must be occasioned by the colour of the soil, which affects heather and other growth.

When looking across this country of dunes stretching towards Poole Harbour, the bright green-blue of the sea with the sunny houses of the distant town make a most interesting picture. On a painting trip some years since, I bicycled from Weymouth

through Wareham and Poole Harbour, and found the country full of many charms. It was this ride that filled me with a keen desire to spend some time at Corfe, which a few years later I did. It is the result of this later visit I am now giving. I think, on the whole, when I stay here again I shall fix my headquarters at Wareham, as being more central. The whole of the Dorsetshire coast is very bright and sunny, and although much wet weather is met with at times, it is a good place in which to pitch one's tent, when a serious bout of work is contemplated.

Poole Harbour is easily got at from Wareham, and affords much interest in the way of shipping, and all those things incidental to a small port. Another point of great interest on this coast is the cliffs, which are very interesting in parts, and provide fine subjects for those who like this kind of work. I have never done much cliff painting, but the little I have attempted shows to me that it may become most engrossing. I mention these cliffs in order to show how varied the interests are in this district. The near views of the building are very interesting, and provide many fine subjects. The bridge which joins the castle to the village should be studied with great care, as it affords plenty of material for thought. I have drawn it repeatedly, and always found fresh points of interest in it. My stay at Corfe Castle was far too short, and with many regrets I left the neighbourhood in which I had found much to occupy me very happily. Months could be passed here with great advantage, and I can heartily recommend the beauties of the place to any seeking a field for landscape work.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

London

I DID not begin with London because I am principally a painter of landscape pure and simple, and not of buildings. Working at a fine building composition has, nevertheless, always given me the greatest joy, and I hope my zeal for such work will never grow less. In dealing with this very wide field of labour, I will begin with the district which has always afforded me greater pleasure than any other. This place is Greenwich, which has greater attractions for the painter than any other locality on the Thames. The whole district is alive with a wealth of beauty which years of labour cannot exhaust. The constantly changing shipping life is in itself enough to make the district loved. And when to this charm is added the grandeur of the Thames either looking east or west, it is wealthy indeed in all material necessary for the making of a picture. Words are very poor and halting when the various beauties of the place have to be described. The atmosphere is in itself a source of loveliness which is ever painting this district in a new way. I have never visited Greenwich without finding some fresh beauty to delight me. The long line of stately buildings of the hospital, either seen from the park or the river, is splendid under every light, and always alive with a glory all its own. Whether on the ebb or the flow, the procession of shipping moves as a stately pageant, which irresistibly calls to the painter to register a thing so grandly beautiful.

I can well remember my first visit here as a child of six, and the effect it had on my mind. Time has only increased the affection I feel for Greenwich and the beauties I see in it. When I began to paint, this was the first district of London which I visited with a keen desire to record my impressions of it. Everything is here so quaint and nautical, that when walking on the river front between the Ship Hotel and the Trafalgar, it would seem only

natural to meet seamen who had shipped with Benbow or Sir Cloudesley Shovel. But failing to meet such ancients, there is plentiful material to charm in what is seen. Lumbering oil or cattle boats creeping cautiously up the river to seek their berths and discharge the cargo which is to help to keep London from darkness or starvation, followed by a little snorting gadfly of a tug with its tail of barges which have lost the tide. I have seen such startling effects of light and shadow that to describe them truthfully would sound more like a page from a fairy tale than one from such a prosaic utterance as a book on Art. Rather go and see, and bless the page which drew to your notice such a world of charms. The hospital itself will supply endless suggestions for pictures of a kind which have become immortal by the brush and pencil of James Pryde.

The whole year round, the river, the park, the palace are full of interest peculiar to its own particular time. I have seen the shipping huddled together along the wharves, snowy and snowed upon, glowing pink in the light of a January sunset. And again, after the sultry heat of a July day the last flush of light has caught the river and lit it up in a way no words can paint. These are just ordinary things which can be written about; all else must be left to the seeing eye, or to a pen more apt than mine. It must not be concluded from what I have said that this neighbourhood is unsuited to the student or beginner. As a young workman I found plenty of study amongst the riverside objects which are here in plenty. At low tide there are always barges and small craft left high and dry which provide fine subjects for careful black and white work.

In my time there were also old ship-breaking yards, where figure-heads abounded from seventeenth and eighteenth century ships, as well as anchors and other clutter. I found great joy amongst such treasures, and often got a fit of the blues when, coming across an object of peculiar beauty of drawing, I discovered that I had "bitten off more than I could swallow!"

Again, in the park will be found trees which can be taken as separate studies, and the tamest of deer, which are a relief after studying cows, sheep, and pigs in the Sussex farmyards. The Observatory, too, is a quaint building, which becomes, however, when associated with the park trees, a highly interesting object. It is from the hill here that most of the fine up and down river things can be seen. I have found great delight in getting on

ILLUSTRATION XXXIV

William James

Exhibited 1761–1771

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION XXXIV

St. Paul's Cathedral

ST. PAUL'S Cathedral and the River Thames were in the old days, as now, a very happy theme for the painter to contemplate lovingly. From this drawing it is seen how different London used to be, and yet I find a greatly enhanced beauty in the many more tall chimneys, and the atmosphere attendant upon the much added smoke, that gives a warm tone to everything. A hard pencil or fine pen was used in this picture to outline the buildings as well as the figures and boats. The shadowed wall coming across the picture is taken in admirably, and the arched flight of steps lends a great interest to the foreground. The hooped dress of the female figure has a great charm, but let no student deplore the absence of such costumes from our modern pictures, as the present day is full of life and every other charm. Our duty is to register the time in which we live, motor-cars and aeroplanes and whatever else comes along. I draw attention in this drawing to the charm of the big tree, as well as all the other scattered bits of light and shade that give a twinkle to the whole surface. This is in very truth a picture in which " flatness," the *bête noire* of Constable, is conspicuous by its absence.



Illus. XXXIV

St. Paul's Cathedral, by William James

anchored barges, as it is marvellous how changed all seems when viewed from a little way out in the river. Take a little interest in their craft, and the barge navigator is won completely, doing all in his power to make things comfortable. The bargee is a critic also, and will soon draw attention if his sails and spars and other tackle are incorrectly represented.

A very interesting subject is often found when any tarring or painting is going forward. Upon such an occasion every member of the crew seems to turn painter, and the whole vessel seems alive with workers. Slung over the sides in stages the men work away busily, making their labour light with song and joke. I have taken Greenwich merely as a type of what a riverside town is, but it must not be concluded that others do not exist. Lower down and higher up there is charm at every turn the river takes. On the north bank, Poplar, Greenhithe, Wapping, Tilbury, and others, are full of interest and beauty. Lower down on the south side, Woolwich, Erith, and Gravesend, all have their own attractions, and are one and all worth visiting. I have mentioned just these few, and leave further discoveries to the student, as my object is to point out localities and not attempt to write a guide-book. Neither do I wish to assert that the districts where I have sought and found my work are the best of all in England. It is my own experiences that I am giving, hoping thereby to help the student in his quest for fields wherein to labour.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

The Thames from London Bridge to Hampton Court and Oxford

THE Tower from London Bridge is a difficult subject to paint, from the simple fact of the vantage point; but otherwise it is a grand thing, with which the student should be acquainted even if he never reproduces it on paper or canvas. The life of the river is here at its very busiest, and the buildings of London are seen at their best. From anchored barges or landing-stages more comfortable points can be found than the bridge—points where work can be pursued with ease. Truly it is a hackneyed spot, having been so often painted; but as I have before remarked, all eyes see differently, and so it is possible that something new may yet be done. The bridges supply much that is interesting and beautiful, and the Embankment is beginning to put on an air of gravity with its sixty years of life.

I know the river fairly well from Gravesend to Oxford, and there is only one spot with which I cannot get on good terms, and that is Westminster and the Houses of Parliament. To me they offer no attractions of any kind, look at them as you will and under any light. Chelsea and Battersea, Chiswick, Mortlake, Putney and Richmond, all have their own varied charms, and are beautiful and attractive. I have worked in Richmond Park, and painted the river from the hill and from Kingston Bridge. And then we come to the glories of Hampton Court. It has been my good fortune to see much of this sweet place, and yet it is so full to overflowing with attractions that the more I see of it the less I seem to know about it.

Some years ago I spent one day a week during a whole summer giving lessons in water-colour drawing to some of its inmates. I

ILLUSTRATION XXXV

PETER MONAMY

1670–1749

AN OLD EAST INDIA WHARF

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION XXXV

Old East India Wharf

THIS is a class of work which the student cannot be too earnestly encouraged to follow. There are no fleeting clouds or moving objects, such as boats or cattle, to distract the attention. All is quiet, and so long as the dog keeps quiet work can be calmly carried on. The subject is not heroic, but it is practical, and should be full of interest to all who are seriously endeavouring to overcome the many difficulties encountered in drawing. All the great painters have grappled with subjects of this kind, and none, I feel confident, has relinquished his work without feeling that he has gained a step. This drawing is true in composition, and the very accuracy with which the details are managed has a charm. When the student has set himself to draw such a cart as this, or a Sussex wain, he will comprehend that such an undertaking is no simple matter, but rather one that calls for all his wit and patience to accomplish well.



Illus. XXXV

OLD EAST INDIA WHARF, BY P. MONAMY

had a charming time, and heard many of the old legends and stories connected with the place. Whether it is the study of buildings, gardens, or landscape the student is intent on, all are found here in perfection. I cannot afford the space to introduce more than one or two things to illustrate Hampton Court, but I hope they will be enough to awaken some interest in it. It seems to me a marvellous thing that so many people have no knowledge of this truly grand palace. Quite a short time since, I went to Hampton Court to give a drawing lesson to a London lady, well out of her teens, who had never seen it before.

To those who seek an arduous drawing task, I recommend the Molsey gate, the Lion gate, and the gate at the end of the large herbaceous border which runs past the tennis court. Each of these gates is of great beauty, and the last named is of a rare excellence. These things I just take at random, but there are many others equally fine. The whole of the gardens are literally full of groups of statuary, vases of stone or bronze, as well as many fountains and fish-ponds. The sunk formal gardens near the vinery are things to love, and therefore to paint. Cardinal Wolsey built the palace and presented it to Henry VIII, and this old building was faced on the two sides fronting the gardens and park in 1697 by Sir Christopher Wren, in order to provide William and Mary with a palace approximating to the glories of Versailles. With great ingenuity Wren did his task, and the new work is built in and appears to be part of the old. And yet, as the palace is entered from the Molsey gate it is Tudor, and as it is left on entering the gardens it is a Stuart palace, with nothing to suggest its earlier history.

The courts in this new part are very beautiful, especially, I think, the Fountain Court, which is most fascinating. When I was teaching here, I used to set my pupils the task of drawing some architectural feature, such as a gateway or colonnade, when in strong sunshine. I insisted on every detail being put in, and all the local colours; the whole of the shadowed parts had to be done in one value of grey. It is astonishing what beautifully simple effects can thus be obtained. The slobbering shadows so dear to the inexperienced are thus avoided, and the student gets to believe in the only true way of painting them. It is very charming to see the delight of my young pupils when, having grasped this principle, they find they can put it in practice in their

work. Hampton Court has always appealed to me very strongly, owing to its brightness of colour generally. The building is of a beautiful red brick with stone dressings, which are of a charming whiteness.

These colour masses, when associated with the dark yew trees and the lawns, appeal very strongly to any one seeking pictorial themes. I think that working amidst so much that is lovely has a good and lasting effect on the mind, and probably tends to have a lasting influence. At least, this is how the spot has always appealed to me, and accounts for my having visited it periodically for many years. There is another reason why the place should be appreciated by the student of Art, and that is the absolute order that is maintained throughout the whole of the palace and its grounds. No unholy scraps of paper are seen anywhere, as no luncheons are allowed here under any conditions. I have worked here from time to time for five-and-twenty years, and have never been subjected to the slightest annoyance, although on several occasions I have fixed upon a holiday time for my visits. The artist who calls to mind the rudeness he has experienced abroad—or nearer home in many of our own villages—will fully realize what this immunity from vulgar intrusion means.

This is an admirable ground to put in practice the use of the pen. Not only the buildings come in well for such work, but even the trees lend themselves to delicate attention, which can be best given with the pen-point. I would here repeat what I have before said about the usefulness of a sharp penknife. When dealing with the white sashed windows it is a great help to find a penknife at hand to deal with these tiresome little white lines. I have never worked much between here and Oxford, with the exception of a short stay I had at Shillingford. Windsor—where much work would doubtless be found—is, of course, most interesting. My object, however, is to deal with the parts of the country where my painting has been done, and about which I can find something useful to say. Shillingford is about ten miles from Oxford, and quite near Dorchester, with its most interesting church.

The low-lying hills, which here hug the river, help to give a great charm, and additional interest can always be found in the passing barges and their occupants. It is as we approach the city, however, that the glory of this neighbourhood is seen and felt. Iffley, a few miles the London side of Oxford, is a pretty village

with a superb Norman church snugly nestling among grand old trees. The church should certainly be drawn by every one who follows Art, whether he be particularly addicted to architectural work or not. I do not think I should have to urge this point, if once the building is seen.

Oxford, however, is our objective, and in this town we have now arrived. So much has been written about the place and its glories, that I will attempt no further remarks on such a well-known subject. As far as I know Oxford I will talk, only I am afraid if my words about this venerable spot fall into the hands of an Oxford man he will not concede that I know much. The colour of the city I do know, which for the task I have in hand is the kind of knowledge necessary. Take a piece of stone from one of its college walls and crumble it up, and the tone of the city is before you. Generally, the place is for the student who loves to paint buildings ; but other joys can be found with little searching. The meadows here are very fine, with timber of unsurpassed beauty. Always associated with the trees are the towers, which form fine subjects for a worker to revel in. The city is but small in space, but nowhere are there so many lovely things in so small a compass. I do not refer just to the beauty of an architectural effort, beautiful as this may be, but rather to grand things produced by light and shade and line. This should be the quest of the student, and here the search is conducted in a land of glories. Kindness and consideration are here seen to perfection.

I have worked for hours in the High Street, in the corner of a shop window, drawing the gateway of St. Mary's by Inigo Jones, and found no hindrance whatever. In the college precincts I felt certain of polite toleration, but in a crowded street during the busy part of the day it was truly astonishing. I have drawn Tom Tower in the early evening from St. Aldate's Bridge with a similar experience. I record these facts as being universal and of great credit to the townsfolk of Oxford.

The college gardens, I believe, are full of interest, but about these I can say little, as my time here was chiefly devoted to subjects found in the college quads and in the streets. The chapels and dining halls have all the charm of things that have lived through many rough times, and now in their old age have settled down to peace and quiet.

I would strongly advise students to study interiors, as there is much to be learned from such a labour, both in drawing and painting. I do not mean in the finicky way in which we see such subjects treated in a modern exhibition of water-colours, but in the manner of Cotman, Bosboom, or Pryde.

Just look at the inside of a room, or chapel, as you would look at a landscape, and paint the masses of light and shade, and let the details come in as best they can. I do not want to be understood to talk heresy either against drawing or detail, but it is painting we are talking about now, and the great things in painting are light and shade. I have seen many a chancel of an old county church full of Stuart and Georgian memorials that would paint splendidly, if properly handled. But instead, if such a subject is chosen, the little incidents, such as an inscription on a memorial tablet, are zealously studied, and the great question of the lighting of the whole thing scarcely thought about, and certainly never properly seen. These remarks are made to call attention to the fact that here is a grand locality where interior subjects can be studied to perfection.

To get away from the quiet of college quads and gardens and be amongst the bright life of the river is soon effected, and in a walk of a few minutes the college barges are reached. The painting of these barges on a bright day in summer is a pleasure I have often promised myself, but which so far has not been realized. I do not know if Melville ever did it, but if not, he was certainly the painter who could have done the subject complete justice. It may be asked why I, as a landscape painter, talk about the work to be found in a city. Although writing chiefly about the work of a student of landscape, I have also mentioned my other professional experiences; and as in my life I sought a change of work amongst the buildings and interest of a city, so I seek to introduce variety by recounting all my wanderings in search of subjects to paint, whether in town or country.

The neighbouring country here is flat but quite interesting. From many parts a mile or two from the city the towers form a fine feature as a skyline which, if I remember correctly, Peter de Wint painted more than once. Boating is made very easy here, and from the water many charming things can be seen. I remember an especially attractive drawing I got of the tower of

Magdalen when punting to Oxford. I should say when I was being punted, as with me as skipper a punt would have but a short life. I must repeat what I have before said, that having drawn attention to this locality the student must be left to make his own investigations.

CHAPTER XX

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

Colchester and Mersea Island

FEW of my painting trips have afforded me greater pleasure than that which I made to this locality. There is a certain amount of work to be done in the town of Colchester itself, which is well situated on rising ground. I painted it once from the meadows, showing the whole length from the water-tower on the right to the lower part of the town on the left. There are stunted trees in the middle distance which are quite charming, and the town hall is a strong and interesting object. I worked at this drawing on a violently hot day, and came nearer to getting sun-stroke than ever before in my life. I never use an umbrella, and find a great charm in getting all the sun I can on my paper. I do not advise doing without a shade one way or another, but should any one follow me in this particular, then I do suggest taking care as far as the sun is concerned. Several times I have run very great risks, when much absorbed in my subject, but this Colchester experience was my worst in this way.

St. Botolph's Priory, which is in the town, is very attractive, only I think houses and trees have grown up since Cotman did his lovely drawing of the place. However, it should be done, as it has many possibilities, and much of architectural beauty. The colour is most interesting, as it is mainly built of Roman bricks from the old settlement. There may be other spots of interest in and about the town, but the search for such I must leave to others, as my visit here was made with the intention of visiting Mersea Island. A motor-bus takes the visitor to this little yachting town, which is only a few miles distant. I have already made it very evident how deeply I am moved when painting in a flat country. The feeling of the all-round openness seems to me generous and full of freedom. As the eye travels over the receding landscape the more crowded it becomes with objects, although gradually losing

evidence of form until the mystery of earth becomes one with that of sky.

It is in such a land that I especially feel how good a thing it is to be an artist, and how worthy such a work is to claim the best and all of oneself. I do not know how my brother artists feel, as they are a silent race, when their work and inspirations are in question. But I do know that my feeling would never have found expression in words save for my desire to help and encourage the student. This Essex lowland is a place of romance which compels thoughtfulness, and a little melancholy also at times which is far from unpleasant. I believe the German musicians send their pupils into the deep forests to think and get ideas. And to such an end would I make my students wander through a flat country. Morning, noon, evening and night, it is always the same beautiful thing, and ever varying. Mersea Island is only a locality surrounded by the sea at high tide, when the causeway which connects it with the mainland becomes very evident. The Romans built this way, I believe, and thus gave another proof of what a practical people they were.

On the road to the sea, farm buildings, scattered trees, with here and there a low-lying ridge of sand hills, all help to provide a rare feast of subjects. Note how soon the straight lines of the causeway become of rare value in a landscape, if broken by the presence of a country wain, a group of cattle, or even a motor-car. At once, with such a foreground-detail intervening, the level landscape becomes the picture and the object only serves to emphasize it. This road to Mersea is seen at its best on a bright cloudy day, or towards evening after a hot and cloudless one. In the latter case, the objects dotted over the country gradually assume the most lovely colour, deepening to a great quality of richness in the near objects and gradually dying into the misty cloud period which intervenes between the land and the last of the evidence of sunlight. The little coast town of Mersea is full of life and interest, as much yachting is done here, and it seems also to afford a pleasant holiday resort. The shipping gave me much pleasure to paint, as I found it did not seem to be very active, and rather given to long spells of inanition, which meant ample time for my study of it. There are many such places along this coast where the student will find much joy, filling his time to great advantage. I am chiefly calling attention to the land of Mersea, as the coast seems much like other parts of Essex and Suffolk. I should like

to explore farther afield in this part of England, in the hope of finding other districts of like charm. Those who may follow my example and paint in Mersea Island should bear this hint in mind, and look to north and south of it.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WATER-COLOUR PAINTER'S COUNTRY

A Visit to Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire

WITH a very small class, as it was war time, I visited this truly charming old town, with my usual object of myself painting from nature, and devoting a certain part of my time to teaching. My students were chiefly ladies who were taking a well-earned rest from hospital nursing and other war work. I had only visited the place once before, when I was working at Shipston-on-Stour, several years previously; so the locality was as new to me as to the members of my class.

Although I usually avoid planting a student down to study churches or old houses, in the street of a village or small town, yet if an exception to my general rule were to be made I think the favoured spot would be this very quaint old Cotswold place. It is quite small, having less than two thousand inhabitants, and yet its architecture suggests a grave stateliness, and is, as a matter of fact, evidence of a bygone social condition that has long ceased to exist.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Chipping Campden was a favourite place of residence for merchants and others whose wealth came from the great wool industry that had its source in the flocks of sheep that fed on the Cotswolds. This industry gradually left the locality, as did much of its wealth, and thus Cotswold towns lost their great people and became comparatively poor, and without any special character excepting in their buildings, which remained as a record of a former importance. Greyness is the keynote of the local colour, the church, the walls of the houses, small and large, the roofs of great grey slabs, the roads, the walls dividing the fields, in place of the southern and midland hedges—all is grey, and grey of a very attractive kind too. It is a rare good place for a student to pitch his camp if he or she must paint villages, towns, or parish churches.

Chipping Campden is essentially a place to give one ideas, and it is ideas and suggestions that an artist wants. Here there are many fine trees dotted about the very spacious street, for practically the whole place consists of one handsome street of great breadth. In the centre of the town is a sort of hall, which, I believe, was originally intended for the wool merchants and staplers to conduct their business during rough or rainy weather. The purpose to which this building is chiefly put at present is that of a recreation ground for children, and incidentally to serve as an interesting feature for artists to contemplate and introduce into their drawings. There is plenty of scope here for a student to spend a very profitable month, and yet never stir from amongst this mass of grey stone houses and cottages. The colour of the whole place is so charming in its reserve that it is almost impossible for the most obstinate disciple of pink and purple to get in edgeways either of those objectionable colours into any study made through the whole length and breadth of this truly beautiful place.

As soon as I had arrived, and taken a walk round with some of my pupils, I told them that I felt compelled to rescind much that I had previously said about the futility of village painting, as here was something quite unique in the way of bricks and mortar, that they could with propriety contemplate and worry themselves with to their hearts' content, and with much advantage as well. From these remarks it must not be thought that we remained in the street during the whole of our stay, for we certainly did not, the country in the immediate vicinity being full of charm, and lending itself readily for the easy selection of subjects, both simple and complicated. There is one feature absent, which is always a great beauty, and very welcome to the landscape painter: namely, a river.

However, we managed very well, especially as in case of necessity a trip could be made to Shipston-on-Stour, and other near places where the blessing of a river was to be had. When choosing a spot for work near to the town the very grand church becomes a fine feature in most compositions selected. The west of England is noted for the size and great beauty of its towers, and amongst them Campden holds a high place. They are of the Perpendicular Period of Gothic architecture, and being built when this was a very prosperous part of the land, the churches bore evidence of this affluence in the richness of the way in which they were built

and the elaboration of their details. The panelling of these towers is very beautiful, and goes far to help a drawing to possess a charm that is almost unique: at the same time much difficulty has to be faced when an attempt is made to give a good rendering of it.

The interiors of these churches are also very fine subjects for the student's energy, and afford excellent work for wet days. In Campden church there are fine Stuart and Georgian memorials that I strongly recommend for studies, as the colour is so reserved and quiet. I have tried many a subject of this kind, in which I have sought to get my ideas expressed by the use of a very few colours, such as ivory-black, yellow ochre, and a very restricted use of some bright pure colours, in order to give scintillating points where they may be found necessary. Marble is a material that in its lights and shadows is very beautiful.

A quite easy walk is to Fox Hill, from which a very grand landscape can be seen, with a fine mass of near woodland, and beyond is a great hill, with a distant open country stretching away to where the sky meets it, and joins up in a gentle mystery. Another very pleasant walk is to Broadway, the road to which place takes one over a most interesting flat land that crowns the Cotswolds here, and from which fine distances are obtained and necessarily open sky effects.

The colour of this comparatively flat district abounds with good farm buildings, very different in their soft greyness to the more or less garish red brick tiles and corrugated iron buildings of the southland farms of Sussex, Kent, and Surrey. Not that I have the usual hatred for the effect of corrugated iron, which seems to me to come in excellently in the landscape at times; in fact, everything does well, where the good fairies "Light" and "Shadow" play, and give their mysterious aid to the painter. In the country through which we are now walking on our way to Broadway, trees are scarce, but here and there they occur singly or in small masses to relieve the monotony of arable land. Note should be taken of the tilled fields here, for the soil is very beautiful in colour; in fact, I think unusually so. The crops raised are of much variety, and this adds an additional charm to this open country. The greystone low walls seem strange to those who have been used to working in the south of England.

The cattle in this district are as varied in colour as they are in most English counties, and of course sheep are much in evidence

everywhere. I found the natives here very kind and hospitable, and no difficulty should be found in getting permission from the farmers to stray about their farms and study in their farmyards and amongst their stock. The rules that appertain everywhere as to shutting gates, not walking over young or standing crops, and never smoking in stackyards, should be observed strictly, and certainly the student and artist should always remember that before going on to a man's land or invading his farmyards permission to do so should first be obtained. Observe this simple rule of elementary civility, and the Gloucestershire farmer is a very nice and pleasant fellow, and a bit humorous too ; but if he considers you are acting in any way intrusively, then he will show himself a very rough customer indeed. I could very easily write a fairly long book on this district, and the great beauty it possesses, with which to cheer the artist. Enough, however, has been said to give a good idea to an intending visitor.

One or two words I will add, and they are on the places of interest in the near neighbourhood. Broadway I do not like, as to me it has too much of the fashionable "interesting" place element, with its "well-known" residents : I can find this sort of thing in London when I want it. Northwick Park, quite near to Campden, is a very interesting house, and possesses a fine collection of paintings, which should certainly be seen if possible. The pictures are well shown, and there are a great number of fine paintings by the Dutch, Flemish, and Italian masters. Although, in the usual acceptation of the term, the place is not a "show house," there should be no difficulty for an Art student to get permission to see the treasures here.

If possible, some of the houses in Campden should be seen, as many have interesting interior decoration in the way of wood panelling. There is one very charming Gothic house in the street—I only speak from what I saw of the outside, as I was not fortunate enough to get an introduction to the occupier, although I do not think there would be any difficulty in doing so, as I found the inhabitants invariably polite and hospitable in all the social grades. A visit should be paid to the photographer, who sells a most interesting series of local scraps, including church metalwork and fine Gothic needlework. This man has also good photographs of the memorials in the church, especially several of the Nocl family—two particularly good ones of the Ladies Ann and Penelope Noel, put up in the early part of the reign of Charles I.

During my short stay at Campden I was only able to exploit the place very casually, and there is much of interest to be seen and unearthed by any student who may take my suggestion of spending a time here. Much that I have here written has but little reference to painting from nature in water-colours, but my object has been to take things as they came to me as I travelled England in quest of subjects for my work, and thus to show how full of interest a life spent in such a way may be. I sincerely hope that my future plans may lead me to visit again this very interesting place, for in one short month justice cannot be done to its beauties.

CHAPTER XXII

ON THE STUDY OF TREES FROM NATURE

NO objects in the landscape present themselves with greater and such varied attractions as do trees. Whether seen singly, in small groups, or great woodland masses, they are always full of beauty. In all seasons of the year their grace and elegance appeal irresistibly to the student of Nature, and at all times they should be drawn and painted. Their leafless state affords as much interest as when they appear in the full garb of summer. Much of the poor tree drawing which is to be seen in the modern landscape painting must be put down to the lack of attention paid to the study of trees in winter. I can very safely affirm that unless the trunk and branch formation of a tree is known, it is impossible to represent the tree with fidelity and truth. I have no doubt that this neglect of tree study in winter is entirely owing to unsuitable climatic conditions.

To sit down and study from nature in the cold part of the year is doubtless impossible, save for the very strong. It is, however, quite safe to do pencil studies when standing, and such work, if done consistently and regularly, will afford an insight and knowledge of the spiney construction of a tree which no other study of the subject will make up for. There should be no attempt to do these drawings hastily, as, in common with all hurried studies, such efforts would be quite useless. As the student gives more and more attention to the study of trees in their leafless state the greater will his interest become in them. In winter time the trees which have given me the greatest pleasure to draw are the oak, ash, and Scotch fir. These trees have such interesting and irregular branch formation, that they afford very special subjects not only for the study of drawing, but also for that of painting. When mentioning these special trees I do not wish to suggest lack of beauty in the other forest trees of our country, but merely to

emphasize those particular ones which have always very strongly appealed to me.

The endless variety which is seen in a group of Scotch firs is quite extraordinary, and there is a crispness in the angular way the branches divide and subdivide which, I think, goes far to

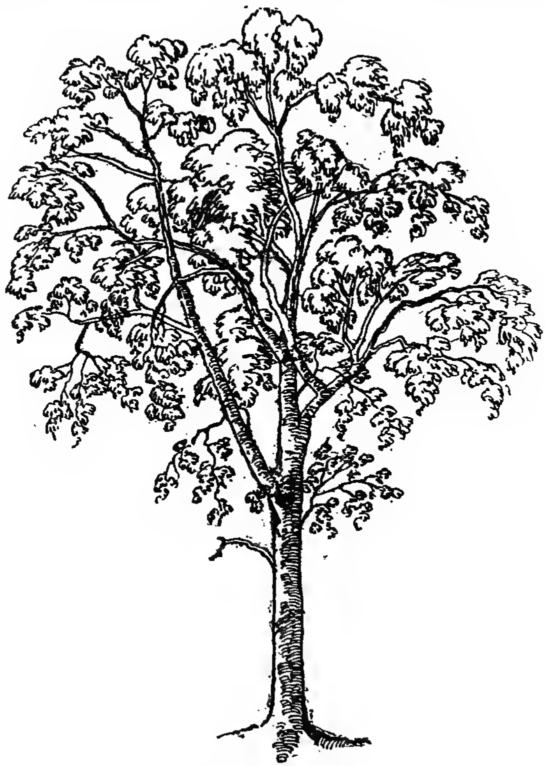


Illus. XXXVI. Scotch Fir

account for their unusual attractiveness. This tree is one which is not difficult to draw, from the fact of it being so very firm and distinct in its leaf masses, that grow more or less in hard sections, which can be grasped with ease. I do not wish to suggest that a perfect drawing of a Scotch fir is not as profoundly difficult as any other subject, but as a study it can be more easily got hold of,

which being the case, the interest in it is kept alive better than in many trees.

Great also is the particularly beautiful quality of its colouring. The rich darkness of its foliage is rendered still more lovely by the bright colouring of the trunk and subsidiary branches. Here again this tree appeals to one in its colouring, in the same way as



Illus. XXXVII. An Ash

it does in the branch formation. The rich colouring of foliage and branches is comparatively easily seen, and thus becomes a satisfactory subject for the student to paint. The colour of the trunk and branches of this tree has a very beautiful way of lighting up under a sunset glow, and becoming almost iridescent. No opportunity should be lost of making studies of Scotch firs, and I can

promise the student that the more attention he devotes to them the greater will his admiration become.

I have often found it a pleasant exercise just to take a group of branches and make a careful drawing of them in pencil or colour, that is when time does not allow of the whole tree or group being done. This suggestion, of course, applies equally to the study of all kinds of trees, and will be found helpful in the effort to get an intimate knowledge of them. My plan has been when I see a thing of beauty to try and register it; fully, if possible, but if time does not allow of that, then as much as can be done.

I never sit down to work from nature unless the subject chosen fills me with enthusiasm; but, on the other hand, I never pass by a beautiful subject without at least making a note of it as fully as time allows. For many years I wandered through England with the sole object of seeking for the beautiful, and of registering my impressions with pen, pencil, and brush. My joys in this pursuit have increased with my experience, and my feelings are still those of the student—ever striving, and yet ever finding the object of my quest leading me further on. The subject of trees to the landscape painter is certainly one of the most important with which he has to struggle, and so it becomes naturally one of the most delightful. A great mistake made by the student in his early days of nature study is his attempt to do too much. Not that I mean too much work, as he can never do that, but rather the attempt to make his studies assume the condition of so-called finish, which is often a far-away imitation of some favourite master.

Such imitations may deceive the ignorant, and get for the executant a meed of praise which is far from a blessing, as it lulls into a false contentment. As I have said before, trees without their foliage should be patiently studied and continually drawn, as in their leafless state they afford a very clear and distinct object upon which to labour. Let such drawings be made in all humility. First scheme out the chief proportions, and when this elementary point has been accomplished, proceed to deal with the construction, so that the drawing demonstrates the fact that the branches, as they spread out from the trunk, come towards the draughtsman and also go away from him.

I know the difficulties of such an effort, and also the continued disappointments that are in store, but it is the only road, rough and hard though it be. The oak is a great favourite of mine,

especially when it grows on a steep and loose-soiled bank, where the great roots become exposed and are gnarled and twisted into grotesque shapes. Such a tree is admirable as a drawing copy, and full of quality as a study. The student should have no thought to make his drawing beautiful in its technical quality, as this will all come in time as a quite natural sequence to his labours.

Simple truth of proportion and construction must be the one and sole object, and as these qualities are mastered all else will gradually be added. If work is entered upon in this way, then it can safely be promised that gradually the vision will become clear,



Illus. XXXVIII. Group of Oaks

and difficulties will be overcome. More and more will be seen in the objects of nature: and things which in the early stages of work appeared complex and insurmountable will gradually become clear to the vision, and so easy to express.

Pupils have often assured me with great earnestness that they saw objects quite clearly, but that it was in putting what they saw down on paper that the difficulty arose. Now of course this is a great mistake, for when an object is clearly perceived it becomes a more or less mechanical process to register it.

In giving my experiences of the trees I have drawn in my tramps in England, I must give a very high place in my estimation

to the willow, both in its full unfettered state, and also when it is in its pollard condition. In those districts of marsh and meadow land where the line of stunted trees marks the course of a brook or river, the most delightful form of tree masses arise, drawing and colour also.

Where the sunlight falls on such a line of pollard willows, they become a most fairy-like silver-grey. In order well to represent



Illus. XXXIX. Group of Ash Trees

this colour, which is peculiar to willows, I have found no colours produce the required effect as well as a mixture of indigo and sepia. Of course great care must be taken, in order to secure the exact proportions of these two colours; but when once this has been found, the delicate effect of a limpid wash of it should leave nothing to be desired. It must be borne in mind that everything depends for success on the wash being very light and transparent,

ILLUSTRATION XL

In Danny Park, Sussex

CARELESSLY light-hearted the painting of this group of trees may appear to the casual observer! But it was done in far from careless mood, and the pains I took with it were great. After making up my mind as to the tone of the colour to be employed, the shape of each patch and its value, the mere putting on of the paint was simple. This kind of drawing I have always found most difficult, and one from which I have derived but small satisfaction for the most part; and yet such practice is good, and should be constantly carried out, as the benefit that may come in time to one's work may be great. No part of this drawing was touched a second time, and it is as a help to acquiring directness of method that such a study is of advantage. There is no question here of managing with a few colours, as I believe that all the paints in my box came into use, in addition to the many tones that I instinctively mixed on my palette as my drawing progressed. I would point out to the student that when painting a study of this kind, where there is much contrast of broad sunshine and deep shadow, values must be determined by comparing everything with the deepest shadowed object. Take, for instance, the case of an elm tree trunk near to the trunk of a silver birch and in the same period of sunshine. The elm is less luminous than the birch, and yet they should be painted of equal value, otherwise there would be the risk of losing breadth of management. Let me state the rule so oft lenaid down by the late Professor Alphonse Legros: "Be careful not to introduce into a period of light, dark parts that may disturb its quality; nor into dark masses, light incidents that may mar its simplicity."



Illus. XL

IN DANNY PARK, SUSSEX

though put on in a mass. It should also be applied once and for all, as any tinkering is fatal. It may be as well to note here where the student will find willow trees in profusion, and this, from my experience, is most certainly Essex; but all low-lying marshy country, such as Cambridge, parts of Hertfordshire, and the country bordering on the Thames and other large rivers, afford endless localities where the charming tree we are considering is seen.

All those who set out to become familiar with the trees of England should quite early in their search give very close consideration to the ash, and having once done so, I can promise the inquirer that it will ever remain a chief favourite amongst trees with him. Not only is the trunk, but the great and subsidiary branches are very full of grace and beauty. To me it has appeared that their quality of surface is capable of taking very beautiful shadows. The way in which the masses of foliage appear to hang on to the branches has always suggested to my mind that the ash is a rare dainty lady, and exhibits that attractive way of showing off a beautiful costume that Watteau has placed on record for our happiness, in the butterfly courtiers of the Court of Louis XIV.

There must be no half-love when the student begins to pay court to the ash; there must be a complete devotion, else there will be no success, rest quite assured. Although the ash does not grow profusely generally, I think I am right in stating that all the counties of England have this tree, and if this is not so, the simple fact that I think it is can be considered as final, as my work has led me into thirty-seven of the English counties, and I cannot think of one where I did not find the ash growing. I am sure the best way to get a great enthusiasm for this sweet tree is carefully to go through Room 99 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and study the drawings of Constable there. Truly these elaborate painstaking efforts are almost enough to make one despair (at least, that is the effect they had on me). But, having taken breath and quietly reflected that all in Art is hard and very difficult, take as much in the mind as you possibly can of these truly grand drawings, and thus fortified seek in Nature a well-grown ash tree, and try to do a like drawing. Make drawings of the separate leaves first, and then tiny branches, and so on, until the whole tree in all its beautiful grace is the subject of your study. And then, when you have done many, many drawings of single trees, seek out a group, and try and produce a piece of work that

ILLUSTRATION XLI

A Study of Trees

THIS is a leaf from my notebook, and although very simple it is given as an example of a method advocated in order to become acquainted with natural objects. They were not drawn, however, merely because they were beautiful, but because of the added charm of their light and shadow composition. The drooping branches and the shadowed lawn combined to make a charming picture. This drawing was made in chalk, which is a favourite medium of mine in which to make such studies from nature. The necessity for making continuous and untiring studies from nature cannot be too emphatically impressed on the student. Notebooks filled with such studies will give endless pleasure in the making and unbounded satisfaction and material help in the future. As soon as things are seen with clearness and their beauties begin strongly to appeal to the student, then without doubt he will long to reproduce his emotions in some way. He will not particularly wish to show them to others, but he will do them simply from love of the subject, and then in time the great reward will come, and he will have the joy of knowing that his work is bringing pleasure to others.



Illus. XLI

A Study of Trees
A leaf from my notebook

will prove how keen has been your inquiry about the ash, and how it should be drawn and painted.

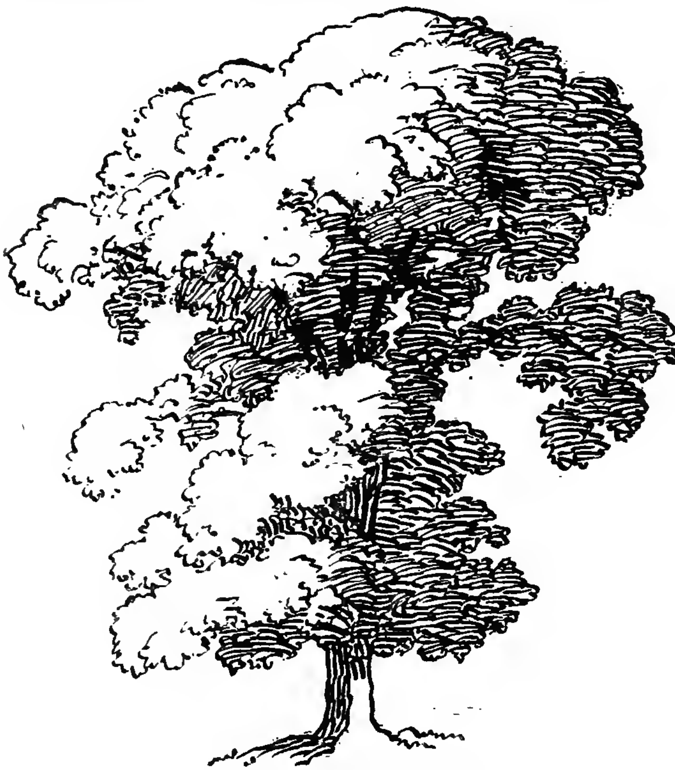
When travelling through England, unless Buckinghamshire is the county visited, the elm is the tree most usually met. In Buckinghamshire, however, the beech is the most familiar forest tree, in fact so much is this the case that Beechy Bucks is a local byword. To every one the elm is well known, and is truly the tree proper of the English landscape. With great hardihood it has struggled with the smoke of London; and although the London atmosphere is very injurious to its health, the grandeur of these trees in the various parks is a feature of extreme beauty. Kensington Gardens especially derive great charm from its presence. I have drawn and painted there for many years, and still find endless subjects for my work.

A single elm tree is a most splendid subject for a study, and when many group themselves in great masses they afford a landscape feature which is without rival as far as trees are concerned. Here again I must refer the student to the absolute necessity of making pencil studies continuously in order to become familiar not only with the construction and peculiarities of the tree, but also with the masses as they arrange themselves in a wide wooded landscape. If the student follows this scheme, and, after many studies, has become familiar with the formation of these trees as they group themselves, he may then use colour with confidence. The result obtained will be of a quality and character which would not have been possible without the preliminary exercise with the pencil that I advise.

In considering this tree, there is no water-colour landscape painter the study of whose work will be of greater advantage to the student than Peter de Wint. This great artist evidently had the very greatest affection for those masses of elm trees, so very familiar to all who know the great parks of England. The warm masses of sunlit foliage, associated with, and contrasted with the velvety shadows form a rare beauty in many of de Wint's landscapes. Not that this painter lacked great quality in all cases where he brought other trees into his works, but the elm seems to have provided him with a subject which he always treated with rare ability and capacity. Whilst I am on this most interesting subject, I should like to record an incident in my working life which occurred during my stay at Chipping Campden. During the time I was at this place, a friend of mine asked me to make a

small water-colour drawing of Spechley Park, near Worcester, as she wanted it as a small gift for Mrs. Berkeley, of Spechley.

I went to Worcester early one lovely August morning, and got to Spechley in time to do my drawing before lunch, and, in the afternoon, completed my work. As I painted, and



Illus. XLII. Elm Tree

got more and more accustomed to making out the distances and details of the park, I was much struck with the unusual magnificence of the elm trees, and at tea time mentioned this impression of mine to Mr. and Mrs. Berkeley. From them I heard that the place was celebrated for the size and beauty of the elm trees, which had been planted under the direction of John Evelyn for

an ancestor of the present owner in the reign of Charles the Second.

Being evidently pleased with the way I was impressed by the elm trees, they took me for a long walk through the park, and showed me those trees of especial size and growth which were looked upon with great pride by the owners. My journeys through England have led me into many of our finest parks and districts noted for the size of their trees, but those I saw at Spechley, both from their size and beauty of shape, gave me the impression of being almost unique. The other trees I saw were very fine indeed, but it was the elms that struck me as being pre-eminently fine amongst much that was beautiful.

Among those modern landscape painters whose work has ever afforded me great delight and help, I especially refer the student to David Muirhead, whose delightful landscapes can be studied with great advantage as to the way in which elm trees, individually and in great masses, should be treated. Treating trees quite differently from the way I do, he paints the most charming pictures, full of convincing results and much originality. In a work of this size and limitations it is impossible for me to take indivdually all our forest trees that become familiar to the student as he wanders through England. Enough has been said, however, to give him a good general idea when this particular feature in the landscape is the subject under consideration.

CHAPTER XXIII

A LESSON AT RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE

A FEW words are necessary before commencing this chapter in order to make its object quite clear. I have planned it in four successive stages, each of which has a coloured illustration, to enable the student to grasp my ideas. It must be borne in mind, however, that I do not wish to convey the impression that this is the way a painting from nature should always be done: it is merely one among many. The lesson here described I wish to make thoroughly practical, and in order that it shall be so, I employ the simplest plan I usually adopt when working from nature; whenever I begin a painting I always endeavour to insert some object of interest complete in itself during the first stages. This may be merely a skyline of hills, a simple mass of middle distance woods, or a suggestion of some building or buildings. If I leave a drawing fulfilling this condition it is in a manner complete, and should possess an interesting forethought of a picture. And so on, through the development of my work, which, if left at any time should still have, stage by stage, a suggestion of the coming complete picture. My scheme is to strike a note of interest at once, and then to proceed step by step to perfect my idea. With these few remarks I will proceed with an account of the lesson which these accompanying illustrations, I hope, may assist in making clear.

This particular trip was made with a pupil while I was holding a class at Richmond, in Yorkshire. The morning I had intended to devote to private work, but my pupil expressed a desire to fathom the secret methods I was supposed to employ in my own work, so I invited her to collect her paints and materials and come with me. On such occasions I adopt the rule of pursuing my own work, but at the same time allowing my companions to watch me working and find out my "secrets" as best they may. This rule invariably breaks down and degenerates into a lesson

pure and simple, which, though it interrupts, compensates me by the pleasure it gives in imparting practical help. And so it proved on this occasion.

The morning was perfect for the subject I contemplated; we reached the field I had selected, and after assuring my companion that the ferocious expression of some cows in the same enclosure was more assumed than real, we settled down to work. After the lapse of a short time I stopped to see how my companion fared. I feared that all was not going well, and my fears were realized; and so my rule not to interrupt my pupil fell to pieces, and the lesson began. My proffered suggestions evoked no resentment, so I felt quite happy. "My dear Miss ——," I said, "will you kindly tell me what you consider the most attractive feature in the landscape in front of us?" She at once answered correctly, showing that she appreciated fully what she ought to have done, but did not do.

I invariably urge my pupils when painting from nature always to register at once in their minds that feature of the landscape which most forcibly holds their attention, for such is, in fact, its soul. Her particular point of view aroused my interest, and I proceeded to give her practical suggestions as to the manner in which I would proceed were I painting the subject she had selected for her picture. I laid down a series of four stages which the drawing must successively reach before it could be considered complete. These stages, or conditions, are arbitrary but necessary when giving a lesson, as some sort of scheme must be suggested.

I then drew attention to what I considered the most attractive and telling point in the landscape, and proceeded to paint it as directly as possible. As I worked I was particular to make it quite clear that although I was using certain colours, my pupil might consider different ones would achieve a better result, and possibly from her point of view this might be so, for the sense of colour is different with every one, but values are arbitrary, and it is upon them that the successful construction of the drawing chiefly rests.

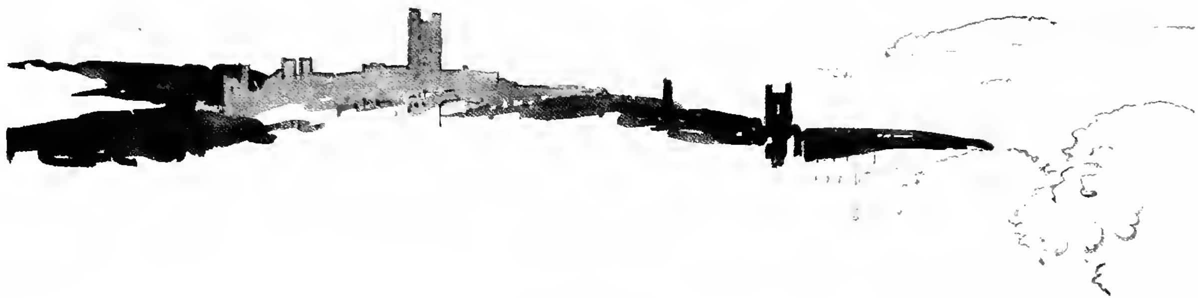
Beyond anything else in the subject chosen, it was the beautiful skyline of distant hills and the nearer mass of castle buildings that especially charmed me. This is clearly shown in Coloured Illustration No. I. After getting these features registered, with all the attention and care of which I had command, the rest of the picture gradually found its proper place in the composition: each

ILLUSTRATION XLIII

A Water-Colour Drawing of Richmond, Yorkshire

Stage I

THE beautiful skyline of distant hills and the nearer masses of castle buildings were registered first. The faint distance was painted with cyanine blue put on with a full brush and allowed to soak in, without touching it a second time. Nearer objects, as the castle buildings, become warmer, and certain details are added; but such details must be done with restraint, otherwise it will force the middle distance forward and so spoil the effect of recession. Detail and value must be reserved for the foreground, where they cannot be overdone. Care must also be taken that even the pencilling of the different parts, from the distant uplands right away through the whole landscape as it gets nearer and nearer to the foreground, is worked with an ever-increasing strength of line, until the nearest objects are dealt with in a bold and resolute style. These pencillings, be it remarked, are never lost sight of, but should play their part in the finished picture; much hidden of course, but yet influencing in a subtle way the completed picture. Pupils have often expressed surprise at the slow and laborious manner in which I dwell upon the early stages of a drawing, and yet when the drawing is finished they have been obliged to acknowledge that after all I manage to get over the ground with celerity. It is the early part of a painting from nature which calls for care and earnest work, not the later stages of local colour, broad washes, and constructive shadows.



Richmond, Yorkshire. Stage I.

part doing its allotted duty in helping to emphasize the choice of something that I sought to make the soul of all. The faint hills in the extreme distance I painted with cyanine blue, put on with a full brush of colour and allowed to soak in, never touching it a second time, but simply trusting to the first intention for the result. As the objects get nearer, as in the castle buildings, the colours become warmer, and certain details may be added. Great care must be taken, however, when middle distance objects are being dealt with to avoid overmuch detail, or they will be forced too much forward and so spoil the effect of recession, which is a point that must be constantly kept in mind. I cannot too emphatically call attention to the necessity for keeping the distance very lightly treated, both with regard to value as well as to the details introduced. Details should be reserved for the foreground, where the distinct drawing of near objects cannot possibly be overdone, but will tend to add greatly to the attractiveness of the picture.

The continuation of the lesson is clearly shown in the Coloured Illustration No. II, where the additional work is added point by point, and every effort is made that each part of the work shall assume its completed condition as the picture develops. My aim was to avoid any necessity for washing out, although I pointed out to my pupil that this was sometimes neccssary when moving from point to point in the building up of a drawing from nature, when it was evident that a mistake had been made in value or colour.

When it is necessary to decide on the colour or value of any part of a study, I endeavour to work broadly at the whole subject I am painting, and am thereby able to judge correctly how the smallest part should be dealt with as regards value and colour. It must be pointed out that as the different stages in the growth of the picture are reached, it is repeatedly necessary to go over parts of an earlier stage, and by added details to lend additional force and interest to the whole.

In painting the houses making up the mass of the middle distance, I took the greatest care to make the great variety of buildings as full of interest as possible. It must be impressed here, that while it is desirable to get as much incident as possible, both in colour and value, into the picture, such details must not be allowed to detract from the general masses of light and shade that make the chief interest of the work.

ILLUSTRATION XLIV

A Water-Colour Drawing of Richmond, Yorkshire

Stage II

THE chief points that make up this stage of the picture are the overhanging mass of clouds, the far distant hills in the lighted-up land beyond them, the warm mass of the town, and the dark middle distance trees. Take note of the way in which the distance to the left of the castle tower is broken up, as is also the nearer country to the right at the back of the obelisk and old monastic tower, which are such familiar objects to all those who know this charming Yorkshire town. Although the effect of the cloud scheme in its masses is quite simple, yet there is ample differentiating, as the varied tones, as well as values, are full of variety. Do not let the student think that my colouring of Richmond town and castle is fanciful. When the place is well known, and that under many aspects, it will be seen how marvellous its moods are. I have seen it when ivory-black seems all that is required to express its sombre greyness, and then, again, when full of sun and brightness—purple, blue, and orange.



Richmond, Yorkshire. Stage II.

The first conception of some beautiful object or scene in nature that has caused one to halt must be retained in the mind right up to the moment when the last brushful of paint is applied for its registration. So now, in this particular instance, the chief points that made up the picture that attracted me were the overhanging mass of clouds, the far distant hills in the lighted-up land beyond them, the warm mass of the town, the dark middle-distance trees and the sunny foreground.

The coloured illustration, which is the third stage on our road, will show clearly how the picture is developing, and emphasize the foregoing remarks.

As my work developed, step by step, it was the picture I have described that was ever present, and for the production of which I sought help from the ever-changing moods of nature as the morning proceeded. At times the picture appeared an absolutely different one, and then again it changed to its original condition of overhanging cloud, shadowed trees in the middle distance and the sunlit foreground. I drew the attention of my pupil to the constant use I made of the point of my brush when painting the buildings of the town, and that each touch was put on very wet from a full brush. By this means hard lines were avoided, and a certain degree of atmosphere added. This fullness of colour, whether used when drawing a line with the brush or in the shadowed cloud mass, again calls attention to " the blot method " when applying paint to paper.

I then explained the terms " complement " and " painting in," and gave practical illustrations. The white sky immediately under and adjacent to the dark cloud is " complemented " by the light houses and again by the light tree-stems and the white cow in the foreground. These features had not been introduced, but I had them stored in my mind and they were coming in good time, and I indulged in some licence. I drew attention to another point of complement, a series of " darks " in various parts of the drawing. The dark cloud is repeated, so to speak, in the distant dark *period* to the left of the castle buildings, on the tower and trees on the right, the dark parts of the middle-distance trees and the black cow. Such points as these are a great help in producing a " twinkling " interest in the picture, and avoiding what Constable calls " flatness " in a painting.

I now referred to the great beauty a blot of colour possesses as compared with the tame effect, laboriously built up by much

ILLUSTRATION XLV

A Water-Colour Drawing of Richmond, Yorkshire

Stage III

IN this stage I made constant use of the point of my brush, very wet, using it full when painting the buildings of the town, and so avoiding hard lines. Attention is drawn to the way in which the white sky is complemented by the light houses, the light cow, and the light tree-stems in the foreground; the dark cloud by the dark period to the left of the castle, and by the tower and trees on the right. The dark patch of colour to the immediate left of the castle was got by using a heavy blot of colour which when dry gave a beautiful texture, superior to that produced by much scrubbing and many layers of washes. Notice the faint lighting up of the middle distance trees, fading to the left, effected by mixing burnt sienna, yellow ochre or raw sienna, with the colder colours of the lower portion of them. The bright green beneath the trees is made with the transparent green oxide of chromium and yellow ochre. A mixture of light red and naples yellow is excellent for producing a sunlight effect on red brick houses. The method of painting this picture is one I very often follow, but it is not by any means the only one. Every subject appeals to me as requiring different treatment, although each and all should be worked in a direct manner, and in the dark masses; the work should not be touched a second time.



Richmond, Yorkshire. Stage III.

scrubbing and many layers of washes. In several cases where I had put on a good heavy blot of colour, especially to the left of the castle and just below the left dark blue spot, it formed a kind of texture showing very faintly those colours of which it was composed. The result produced by such a separation of the colours as they dry is often very beautiful and productive of much atmosphere.

A change in the colours of the landscape had interrupted for a time the scheme I had pictured in my mind, but at this point in the lesson Nature resumed her original expression, and I was able to carry on my preconceived plan; a passing heavy cloud cast its strong shadow on the line of foliage and ground to the left of the castle and on the distant right hand part of the town with the square tower. Particular attention should be paid to the faint lighting up of the middle-distance trees by the interesting warmth of their upper part, and when they fade away into the left-hand corner of the picture. This effect is obtained by mixing burnt sienna, yellow oehre or raw sienna with the dark or colder colours with which the lower portion of this mass of trees had been painted. Attention should also be paid to the bright green period which appears beneath the trees as seen between their trunks. This colour is made with transparent green oxide of chromium and yellow ochre to give it sunny brightness. These bright spots are a great help in giving incident to a drawing, and cause the whole picture to scintillate, so to speak.

I showed how deadly dull, flat and uninteresting a picture which lacked diversity of incident, both in value and colour, must surely be; that nothing is so productive of flatness as washing and scrubbing out, a method so dear to many. I impressed on my pupil the necessity of unremitting application to drawing which tends so much to eliminate flatness. I pointed out the advantage of allowing the board to rest flat on the knees, instead of perching it on an easel, for by the latter method the colours run down and away from those parts into which they are intended to sink. I showed her how certain colours which I was using were obtained—particularly one, a grey-green, which occurred in the dark tree masses where a comparatively light period came on the upper part of the trees, and was got by mixing green oxide of chromium with ivory-black. This was used very wet, so that when dry it had a good "bloom." Another interesting colour was a mixture of light red and naples yellow, admirable

ILLUSTRATION XLVI

A Water-Colour Drawing of Richmond, Yorkshire

Stage IV

THE sunlight in the foreground helps to give value and interest to the dark trees in the middle distance. The group of cows also tends to make the dark trees appear still darker, and to give a point of bright interest to the whole picture. Attention is also called to the light tree-trunks, which help a little to brighten things generally. Light and indian red, burnt sienna and yellow ochre, were the colours I used in painting the cattle. I should be sorry to try and enumerate the colours used in the lit-up mass of foreground trees, for should I do so, every paint which took part in the rest of the drawing would come in, and being so, a list of fourteen or fifteen colours would be a little tedious. I must again say a word or two on the compromising spirit in which an artist should sit down to paint. It is a frame of mind that is not comprehended in photography, and further, that is not understood by many artists. The work before a student (and who amongst those who paint from nature is not one?) is to convey an emotional impression of a special object that has arrested attention by its beauty. Such being the case, entire work, as stage by stage is worked through, must always be looked at as a whole, and not studied piecemeal. Stare hard at the group of near trees, and the painter is assured that their colour is one thing; but let him, when desiring to settle the point, look broadly at the whole picture he is painting, and then the mass of trees in question when viewed in their relationship and association with the entire work, becomes another; and this latter judgment, be it remembered, is the just and correct one. I may be repeating myself, but the point is an important one and will bear repetition.



Richmond, Yorkshire. Stage IV.

for a sunlight effect on red brick houses. It frequently happens that as the work approaches completion and allows of a somewhat comprehensive survey of the general effect of the work to be taken, certain parts require strengthening and emphasizing. So it was with the work I was engaged on; the sunlight was now quite to my satisfaction, and the herd of cows mentioned above had wandered exactly to the position I wished.

It will be seen in the fourth and last coloured illustration of this series how admirably the sunlight on the foreground helps to give value and interest to the dark trees in the middle distance. The group of cows also tends to make the dark trees appear still darker, and to give a point of bright interest to the whole picture.

This group of life was also very necessary as affording a point of strength in the foreground. The colours I used in painting the animals were light and indian red, burnt sienna, and ivory-black. This part of my work, simple as it may seem, called for more care than the previous stages. The colours I used on the near part of the picture were those I had previously employed. In painting the light tones in the mass of sunlight the greatest care must be taken not to produce any overstrength of colour, otherwise the attempt to produce sunlight will surely suffer.

Thus ended a happy day—my pupil happy in receiving instruction, and I in imparting it.

CHAPTER XXIV

WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS PAST AND PRESENT

IN making a selection of water-colour painters, I have taken those whose work has been a help to me in my studies. It is in no way intended as a complete list of the great in my own particular school of labour. Neither is it meant in any sense to include all the men I have chosen to discuss. As I became more and more interested in my work, I sought for help from those who had laboured in the past, and to my satisfaction invariably found it. The drawings which awoke my enthusiasm earlier than any others were the de Wints in the Henderson bequest, and those by Turner. In the days when I studied these, they were housed at the National Gallery. Curiously enough, I always had a predilection for Turner's work for the *Liber Studiorum*, and work of a like nature. "The Kirkstall Abbey," "Gibbet Hill, Hindhead," and "Norham Castle," have always been my great favourites, although none of the others in this series were at all neglected.

I never had any very strong drawing towards those very elegant little "poems" which were done for the steel engravers who illustrated Rogers' *Italy* and similar works. My feelings in this particular have increased rather than otherwise.

Having mentioned this, my earliest study of the work of others for help and encouragement, I will take one by one all those whom I have studied. I say studied, for it must not be concluded that I have not looked with pleasure and admiration at thousands of others. When I have sought out the work of a particular man for study, my desire was to try and embody his method in my own efforts. Method was what I sought help to obtain, leaving my manner to form itself from a continual and devoted study of nature.

Paul Sandby is an early master of water-eolour drawing, whose work should be known to all those who seek for knowledge in the

ILLUSTRATION XLVII

THOMAS GIRTIN

1775–1802

KIRKSTALL ABBEY

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION XLVII

Kirkstall Abbey

IN this drawing Girtin shows very distinctly the grasp he has of landscape composition, as well as his great knowledge of the technical possibilities of his medium. The very simplicity of the manner in which the effects are gained proclaims Girtin a really great artist. The pure neutral tones—made up, without doubt, from the few colours with which all the old water-colour painters rested content—are obtained how? On this point the painter alone could have informed us: we admire, and seek by hard work and study the answer to our query. The placing of the Abbey Tower in the picture is exactly right, and the glimpse of distance to the left of it comes in to lure the attention to where the land joins the sky, and so on out of the drawing. Of incident there is plenty, and yet in the groups of cattle, the figures approaching the gate, and the woman coming across the meadow, nothing is too forced, and little or nothing could be dispensed with. I wish the paper that these old masters used could be obtained now; but the quest seems vain, although it was nearly approached in a paper which was placed on the market a few years ago, but which finding little favour ceased to be made. In most of Girtin's drawings it will be noticed that he was getting away from the simple, slightly washed-in works of his forerunners, like Sandby, and that he sought, by the addition of stronger colouring, to get an effect of "painting." Among the many beautiful drawings I have seen by this great master the one opposite takes a very high place indeed.



Illus. XLVII

KIRKSTALL ABBEY, BY THOMAS GIRTIN

ILLUSTRATION XLVIII

ANTONY THOMAS DEVIS

1729–1817

LANDSCAPE, CHURCH AND CATTLE

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION XLVIII

Landscape, Church, and Cattle

I CANNOT say much about this picture, except that it is a very lovely thing. Whatever I have already written as regards strength of foreground management, as well as the gradually lessening values as the distance is approached, is here forcibly exemplified. The scattered spots of light appear everywhere, thus avoiding any appearance of flatness. One special point worthy of attention is the charming manner in which the light foliage of the herbage and undergrowth is dealt with in the foreground. The bright clear sky is admirably suited to the drawing; any clouds would have been in the way. The little group of cattle comes in with telling effect, as also does the church spire. I would prefer a tower, but, whether tower or spire, its duty is well fulfilled, showing plainly the keen sense of composition possessed by this artist.



Illus. XLVIII

LANDSCAPE, CHURCH AND CATTLE, BY ANTHONY THOMAS DEVIS

ILLUSTRATION XLIX

PAUL SANDBY, R.A.

1725–1809

ETON COLLEGE AND WINDSOR FROM THE PLAYING FIELDS

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION XLIX

Eton College and Windsor from the Playing Fields

THIS is a beautiful picture, in the grand old style of water-colour drawing. It is a simple drawing surely, when compared with later water-colour work that was soon to come to the fore, and which, in the accomplished hands of Cotman and de Wint, became true painting. The sequence of values, from the strong foreground to the delicately handled distance, show very clearly the just manner in which these old painters reproduced the beauties of nature. In this drawing I would point out the way in which the left-hand birch tree is drawn, and how tellingly the shadow beneath it, in which the cattle are resting, is placed, and how it helps to make the distance still more distant. Nothing is thought too trifling for consideration, and yet all is made subservient to the one great plan, namely, the just and proper management of values.



Illus. XLIX

Eton College and Windsor from the Playing Fields, by Paul Sandby, R.A.

Art he practised so well. What I know of his work has chiefly been gathered from the examples in the Print Room at the British Museum and from private collections. His drawings are still to be picked up out of old portfolios in second-hand bookshops and such like places. I bought a very charming study by him once for seven shillings and sixpence, and doubtless many more are here and there hidden away in odd corners.

The great charm of Paul Sandby's work is his masterly sense of composition, combined with a great delicacy of workmanship. Not only has he a rare refinement in his line, but in addition a keen appreciation of values. The illustrations I have selected of this artist are given to show his mastery of detail.

Search as one may amongst the work of those men who lived during the greater part of the eighteenth century, and it will be a difficult matter to find even a very few whose drawings will safely hang in the company of this truly great artist. While practising the greatest restraint in the use of colour, which he systematically limited to a mere tint, yet the results he achieved were truly masterly. I have in my mind a tiny drawing of Windsor Castle, belonging to a friend at Shrewsbury. The astonishingly refined pencil work with which he sought to give backbone to the drawing is of rare beauty. The value tones of sky, distance, and foreground are simple transparent washes of blue (some sort of prussian, I think), ivory-black, burnt sienna, and yellow ochre. A very limited palette truly, and yet the truly marvellous effect obtained from the use of such produced on the mind a feeling of entire satisfaction. The drawing is quite small, probably 9 in. by 6 in., and yet the feeling on the mind is as if a great painting were being looked at: it is indeed a masterpiece, and yet how slight the means appeared by which the wonder was achieved. All indeed, with the exception of the mind that fathered it.

It is the same with this master's drawings of buildings, when seen near, and apparently done for the service of engravers working for some topographical works. The beauty of the drawing, the rare manner by which be conveys the appearance of crumbling stonework, the construction made evident by the most reserved use of delicate shadows, all is done with a profound knowledge of his art, which produces absolute contentment.

When looking at the works of moderate size by Sandby, I have often wondered why he ever laboured at the larger and compara-

tively uninteresting compositions. The reflection is, the public demanded such works, and the artist had to comply. When looking at the drawings of Sandby, I have been much struck with the delicate beauty of the figure groups he introduced into his work, and the great judgment with which they are placed.

Thomas Girtin is the next great man of the past whose work I have studied with zeal and pleasure. It is a marvellous thing that this artist accomplished in his short life so much work. A large number of his drawings are at the British Museum, showing the wide range of his labours. In the drawings which he made for a panorama of London, his extraordinary facility in the use of the pen is seen to great advantage. Other pictures are here seen which show how truly great was his poetical appreciation of the beauties of nature. Although his drawings are very often of trifling size, he yet manages to get into the smallest space subjects which might be painted as gallery pictures.

I have often wondered why Girtin, in common with many of the old water-colourists, indulged in painting such huge pictures. Take, for instance, the " Bridgnorth " drawing in the Print Room. Can there be any doubt that this picture would have been far more forcible, and certainly infinitely more charming, had it been done on a much reduced scale ? It seems scarcely credible that a man of such judgment in matters of Art as Girtin could have sought to compete with the premier medium. And yet, for what other reason could Girtin, de Wint, Turner, or Cotman have painted the huge things they sometimes did produce ? I do not think anything is gained by such efforts, and certainly it seems to me that much is lost in the way of concentration of effect. However, Girtin did not do much work on this big scale—for which I, for one, am very thankful.

The examples here given of Girtin's work are but a meagre means of drawing attention to his genius. Very beautiful as each work is without doubt, they must only be taken as a suggestion to the student to make further investigation. However beautiful Girtin's drawings of buildings were, it is in his works where he deals with the theme of the open landscape that his genius reaches its highest flight. In the " White House " he proved himself to be one of our greatest landscape painters, and worthy the unstinted praise which Turner is said to have bestowed upon it. One of the greatest advantages I have found in well knowing the work of the great men of the past has been the enthusiasm it has

ILLUSTRATION L

P. WILSON STEER

BRIDGNORTH

ILLUSTRATION L

Bridgnorth

IT affords me the greatest pleasure to be able to include a reproduction of a picture by Mr. P. Wilson Steer. There are but few opportunities given the student of seeing the water-colour drawings of this master of his craft. His works quickly find a resting-place in private collections, and there they remain hidden from public view. The picture here reproduced is of Bridgnorth, in which locality Mr. Steer has done much work that has given great pleasure to those of the public who are capable of appreciating a really fine picture. This one, like all other great works, at once attracts and appeals by its breadth of handling. A closer examination reveals with what labour and thought this happy result is obtained. I take this opportunity of acknowledging the great encouragement I have received from Mr. Wilson Steer, as well as the great benefit I have derived from the study of his works.



Illus. L

BRIDGNORTH, BY P. WILSON STEER

ILLUSTRATION LI

THOMAS GIRTIN

1775–1802

RIEVAULX ABBEY, YORKSHIRE

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LI

Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire

THIS is the work of a truly great artist, so with much diffidence I will first consider it as a whole, and then go over this fine picture point by point. In his poetic rendering of the ruined castles and abbeys of England Thomas Girtin stands alone, and when we consider how brief his life was, it is marvellous how much he accomplished, and how splendidly. For many years I have visited the so-called great Exhibitions, and have been astonished to see how little those who aspired to paint a fine old building have sought inspiration from Thomas Girtin. This lovely abbey is here painted from a point that shows rare judgment on the part of the artist, and everything in the sky and foreground is made to minister to the same rare beauty of the building itself. I cannot think that it was accidental that the left-hand tree was made just to avoid interfering with the stately lancet window, neither do I think the two central recessed arches that are partly seen are there except by the deliberate intention of the artist. All seems to have been well thought out, and all comes well. Examine the painting and it will be seen that the technique is of the simplest; the colours used are few, but the result stands as a treasure for all time. The crumbling stone is rendered with apparent ease, and yet the ease is only apparent, for Girtin was a giant for work, and spared himself no pains.



Illus. LI

RIEVAULX ABBEY, YORKSHIRE, BY THOMAS GIRTIN

ILLUSTRATION LII

JOHN ROBERT COZENS

1752–1799

VIEW IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

Victoria aud Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LII

View in the Island of Elba

ALTHOUGH I do not care much about mountain pictures, yet this is by so great a man, and is so extraordinarily well managed, that I have included it amongst these pictures. If I may use the term, the texture of this rocky pass, and the way it is dealt with, is a theme upon which the student should patiently dwell, and from it draw inspiration. I have introduced many of these pictures in the hope that students may seek out the originals and study them carefully. After all, I have but made a very small selection, just, I thought, sufficient to create a desire for further inquiry and investigation. Here are seen the scattered periods of sunlight, and the equally distributed masses of shade—the result being happy, satisfactory, and free from flatness. As the student will find out when he gazes at the works of these old artists, all the results obtained were produced with very few colours; in fact, for the most part, with those I have given in my elementary list. Certainly with J. R. Cozens, the very few colours he used demonstrates the fact that "brevity is the soul of wit." As soon as Cox and Copley Fielding began to paint the number of colours that quickly came into use rapidly increased, and deplorable indeed has been the result. During the last twenty-five years a light has dawned on water-colour art, so that now not only is the student directed to the work of Girtin and others, but he can find much profit in the study of a small group of contemporary men. Although these artists may be few, they are scattered broadcast, and belong to no particular institution.



Illus. LII

VIEW IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA, BY J. R. COZENS

awakened in me for labour. Toil seems to have been to them a condition they delighted in.

It is no wonder then that the fruits of their lives were so fine and the work so plentiful. To me there seems very little doubt that their art was their all, undisturbed by few other distractions or considerations. I cannot be too emphatic in pointing out that in learning this lesson of devotion the student is acquiring much that will be of great value to him in his work. In many of Girtin's drawings it will be seen that he was breaking away from the simple tinted scheme on which his predecessors laboured for their effects, and that he was assuming real painting, which culminated in the works of John Varley, Turner, de Wint, and the later water-colour men. There was, however, in his paintings a great reserve in the size of his palette, and always a seeking to produce his effects by very simple means.

It was quite early in my labours that I felt very impressed with the quality of Peter de Wint's work, and the advantage to be gained by a close study of it. It was chiefly the texture of this master's colour which awoke my enthusiasm. I should not like to question the intimate way others have scrutinized his work, or claim to have exceeded it. I have, however, returned again and again to the study of de Wint's work, and each time I am more and more impressed with the extraordinary beauty of his colour. If possible his best work should be looked at, and the rest for purposes of study left alone. In the labour of such a genius, all his work is in a way excellent, but much does not strike the highest note. It is when he is spontaneous that his best achievements are reached. In his more laborious efforts I have always felt that he was doing much that went against his feelings and convictions.

Peter de Wint was a man who evidently was intent upon making his work remunerative, and having this end in view he allowed his paintings to suffer. If the painter aims at any other object than the very simple and distinct one of pleasing himself, he is beginning to tread a bad road. It is very sad to think that the sale of a picture has to be refused, because it is not possible to "put rather more detail into it." But the artist must on this point be firm if he is intending to think more of his reputation than the sale of his productions. In writing about the help I have found in the work of de Wint, I think it best to refer to those pictures which have been my chief joy. Certainly a foremost

place is occupied in my mind by the large view of Gloucester in the possession of Mrs. Tatlock, at the time of writing in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. It is masterly in composition, as well as evidencing in all its parts the greatest beauty of execution. I think it is just the perfection of a water-colour painting, and worthy of continual study.

Also at Kensington, but this time in the Henderson Bequest, is " The High Bridge, Lincoln," which is of its kind a fine thing, being full of life and emotion. Nowhere can be so well seen the advantage of leaving the " first intention " undisturbed. There is in this picture a great robustness of handling, which is an attraction entirely absent in those works where detail and elaboration are sought. Another very interesting picture in the same collection is that which is called " A Road in Yorkshire." The heavy clouds and shadowed road are brilliant beyond words, and are another example of the attractiveness of spontaneous work. Although of great simplicity, this picture has always been a great favourite of mine.

I was very fortunate when painting in the neighbourhood of Ludlow, Shropshire, to have an opportunity of seeing the very fine lot of de Wints at Oakley Park. Several of the paintings in this collection are reproduced in the beautiful little work on de Wint by Sir Walter Armstrong. All lovers of water-colour work should, I think, possess this book, as it gives such a lively idea in a small compass of this great man's achievements. I do not think there should be much difficulty in gaining admission to see these pictures, but Oakley Park is not a " show house." The " Harlech Castle," at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is one of those emotional pictures where all is seen at a glance, and its beautiful story told in few words. I always feel that in this work the artist was completely in love with his subject, and laboured at high pressure. This is quite a type which is repeatedly found as the range of work studied becomes larger and more complete. Interesting and full of merit as many of de Wint's building pictures are, I do not advise the student to seek for help from them in this direction. It is far better to consult the drawings of J. S. Cotman and Thomas Girtin. Both these men have a mastery in architecture which is quite apart, and perfect.

When studying the works of the early water-colour men it should be borne in mind the number of years they have been painted. The tone of age which is of exquisite beauty should

ILLUSTRATION LIII

PETER DE WINT

1784–1849

CONISBORO' CASTLE

ILLUSTRATION LIII

Conisboro' Castle

NO artist ever came nearer painting a perfect picture than did Peter de Wint. Before his time, with few exceptions, this medium had been truly water-colour drawing. In the able hands of de Wint a strength of colour was used with a blending of tints that entirely altered the appearance of a work in which water served as the distributer, and in its solidity gave it almost the strength of oil painting. Whether this departure was an all-round advantage must be left to the individual to determine. At its best, I think the work of this truly great artist stands out by itself. His sense of colour was more brilliant, his choice of subject more apt, and his judgment as to the exact time when a picture should be left, better than that of any of his contemporaries. I refer to de Wint at his best. At times his work was too black, too blue, too laboured. There is in many of his pictures a striving after undue finish, and an evident desire to produce an important work. In these he failed, when they are compared to his direct emotional efforts, that were evidently produced and completed at one sitting. This picture of Conisboro' Castle shows him in his happiest mood, and is a truly beautiful picture. The placing of the castle is perfect, as well as the proportion of space left for the distance. The line of downs, the patch of smoke, the strength of the foreground, and its freshness of colour, all help to make up a theme of rare quality. Add to these the serene and unaffected sky, the mellow tone pervading all, and it would be difficult to equal this masterpiece of a master painter.



Illus. LIII

By permission of Miss Tatlock

CONISBORO' CASTLE, BY PETER DE WINT

ILLUSTRATION LIV

PETER DE WINT

1784–1849

A ROAD IN YORKSHIRE

National Gallery

ILLUSTRATION LIV

A Road in Yorkshire

I HAVE a distinct recollection of the delight experienced at the first view of "A Road in Yorkshire," a delight which, after many years, still grows. Experience in painting has only tended to increase this appreciation of its qualities, and proves to me that my early judgment was correct. As a thing of colour, beauty, and grandly simple line, few, if any, of Peter de Wint's paintings equal it. Here he is in his best mood. In love with his subject, he places his impression on record with a rare directness. All is full of emotion, and the ease in execution is born of an intensely appreciative mind added to a long experience. It is a picture that should be continually studied by the painter of landscapes. The subtlety of the sky, with the delicately planned cloud scheme, that accounts for the shadowed foreground and gives additional charm to the sunlit distance, makes a picture of enchanting beauty. My words will not have been in vain if they tend to make the student, if possible, more in love with this artist's work than before.



Illus. LIV

A Yorkshire Road, by Peter de Wint

ILLUSTRATION LV

PETER DE WINT

1784–1849

KNARESBOROUGH CASTLE

National Gallery

ILLUSTRATION LV

Knaresborough Castle

THIS is a work of de Wint in his best style. The station point from which to view so charming a subject is well chosen, a subject in which all the parts seem to fall happily into line, with the most satisfactory result. It is a picture that every student should study, and study with the greatest advantage. The palette of de Wint was not over large, but, of course, had a wider range than his predecessors. To the curious, the list of colours this master used is given in a most charming book on Peter de Wint by Sir Walter Armstrong. The sympathy with which the crumbling stonework of the castle is painted is perfect, as well as the luminous density of the right-hand trees. Note also the flash of the river as it touches the heavy mass of the foliage. All is spontaneous, nothing is over-wrought; and yet everything is full and sufficient in its suggested detail. The sky, again, is serenely beautiful, and gives to all a feeling of quiet, such as is found at the close of a hot summer's day.



Illus. LV

KNARESBOROUGH CASTLE, YORKSHIRE, BY PETER DE WINT

never be copied, but rather it should be studiously avoided. The student who is inclined to copy exactly, instead of trying to master the principles on which the old men worked, will find himself involved in many difficulties. For instance, in most of the heavy skies painted by the early men, the blues have fled, leaving in many instances only the reds they were mixed with. There is a highly interesting instance of this sort in a large seascape by Copley Fielding in the Wallace Collection. In this picture the great storm-cloud might have been the lurid intensity which overhung the city of Dis. I was very young when I first found delight in gloating over the work of the early men, and the worry these faded colours gave me was quite pathetic. Of course I knew nothing about fleeting colours, neither had I access to the many admirable little manuals on the subject of trustworthy pigments. What has always struck me as remarkable is the manner in which the dark blues of Peter de Wint have lasted. I believe he used a special indigo of his own, which must have been a very fine colour, and doubtless helped in the making of his many wonderful greens.

In reviewing what I know of de Wint's work, it appears to me that he delighted in the use of white paper, and sought to supply the soft neutral tone with the paper only left where he wanted his bright spots of high value to appear. This method of his gives a most brilliant and convincing effect to his works. Curiously enough, it has been remarked to me by Wilson Steer that in his opinion a water colour should always be painted on white paper; I give this authority as that of the greatest of our landscape painters of the present time, whether as a painter in oil or water-colour. I am a great believer in authority, and here I give an opinion which is second to none in support of my own.

The next friend I found amongst the water-colour men of the past was John Varley. When the finest work of this artist is looked at, it is to me very evident that it must be ranked with the very best of his contemporaries. It is true that his work was most unequal, and to this fact may be attributed the reason of his not occupying a post of greater distinction. Many of his later drawings are very conventional, being obviously painted for Exhibitions. I often wonder how much injury has been done to Art by this herding together in the great periodical shows. The ill effect on the work of certain men can be very clearly traced.

It seems to have been the desire of artists when preparing work for exhibition to strive to produce a thing of obvious labour with

which to impress the public. With this object in view, the rapidly executed and spontaneous effort was put on one side as unworthy, thus leaving to posterity the task of finding in these cast-offs great works of art. I have in my possession a picture of "Holy Island Castle," by John Varley, signed and dated 1810. An apparent replica of this drawing, evidently done in the studio, signed and dated 1811, is in one of the public museums. If these two drawings are compared, it is very evident that the earlier one, which was no doubt painted out of doors, is the great work, and that the carefully laboured one done at a later time falls far below it in merit. I do not think Varley himself doubled his work, but he had to think of satisfying the buyer whose ignorance demanded the spoiling finish and exactness of manipulation. I think the student should be told of this rock upon which he may come to grief, and so be prepared to face it. Many of the works of Varley have an extraordinary decorative quality, which makes them very welcome in the furnishing of a room. They also have an exactness of method, especially in his later period, which has a certain attractiveness, but should not be imitated. This artist has the reputation of being the first man to paint in water-colours, as distinct from his predecessors, hence he is called by some the father of water-colour painting.

I think I have described already the difference between a water-colour drawing and a painting in the same medium. However, I will do so again, as such a reference comes in appropriately when dealing with the work of Varley. A water-colour drawing is an outlined work in pen or pencil in which the local colours are faintly washed in. On the other hand, a water-colour painting is produced in the method of oils, being painted with tones varying from the light masses in the sunny passages through the different stages of tone until the deep shadows are reached, where the richest colour of which the medium is capable is used.

The great point of variance between oil and water-colour work is, that in the former the shadows are executed in thin transparent colour, and the lights in thick solid paint, whilst the latter method is exactly the reverse. Now this was undoubtedly the way Varley worked, but whether he was the first to paint in water colours I will not venture to say. It seems to me that several men began to alter their method about the same time, which was, roughly, somewhere about 1790. After thinking much about the manner of painting in water-colours, I have come to the conclusion that

ILLUSTRATION LVI

RICHARD COOPER, JUNR.

1740–1814

A ROCKY LANDSCAPE

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LVI

A Rocky Landscape

THIS is an example of the early landscapes, of which several are shown in this volume, that are painted in the unaffected manner which distinguished the artists of that time. The whole scheme of such a drawing as this is an absolute dependence on the constructive value of the line, to which is added a just appreciation of colour values. The small amount of actual colour used is confined to a little elear cyanine blue in the sky, yellow ochre or burnt sienna in the sunny periods, which, with the addition of light red, make up the warmer colours and strength of the shadowed foreground. I point out to the student the great care and masterly fashion in which the distance is dealt with. The inequalities of the broken ground from the distance to the near part of the picture are all very beautifully enforced by the just manner in which the shadows are considered. The group of figures and the boat are introduced with telling effect, although so slightly suggested. Infinite care in detail, as well as strict adherence to the main idea in the entire scheme of light and shade, is what a student must strive to learn from these old masters of landscape painting.



Illus. LVI

A Rocky Landscape, by Richard Cooper, Junr.

ILLUSTRATION LVII

JOHN VARLEY

1778–1842

MOEL HEBOG, LOOKING DOWN THE VALE FROM NEAR DINAS EMRYS

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LVII

Moel Hebog, looking down the Vale from near Dinas Emrys

THIS picture is a delightful one, and the man who painted it was a fine artist, though I have never contended he was a great one, for, capable as he was, his name is not amongst those of the first rank. Occasionally John Varley struck a high note, but as he failed to sustain the effort in the majority of his pictures, so I place him below the best. The student is advised not to paint this kind of picture, for of the numbers that have flooded the great Exhibitions during the last hundred and fifty years, some have been painted well, others indifferently, but the vast majority very miserably indeed. I do not believe any subject has had such a vogue. Now this picture is painted well, but not superlatively so. But my reason for including a picture which I nevertheless decry is this, that it is one of the good things left to us from the past. The composition is fine, but not very original; the values are excellently placed to ensure the construction of the landscape, and, in common with all Varley's work, the technique affords much that may profit the student. The simple sky, the judiciously receding hills, and centring of interest where the flash of water comes in contact with the mass of dark foliage, are all rendered to admiration. With what judgment the foreground rocks and figures are placed, and how well they serve not only to break the line of the river, but also to assist in pushing back the middle distance, and so give strength to the whole picture!



Illus. LVII

Moel Hebog, looking down the Vale from near Dinas Emrys, by John Varley

ILLUSTRATION LVIII

JOHN VARLEY

1778–1842

LAKE SCENE

ILLUSTRATION LVIII

Lake Scene

THE present picture is a very beautiful example of John Varley's work, and shows him in the light of a painter who steered very closely to and was influenced by Richard Wilson and Claude Lorraine. It is a classical composition, built up from preconceived ideas of what a picture should be rather than from an emotional impression that was gathered from a direct communing with nature. Much help can be gathered by the student from the study of Varley's work, but he is very uncertain, and many of his paintings should be severely left alone. The one before us is certainly a good drawing, in which the distance is deftly handled, and the incidents of the foreground put in with great knowledge and much taste. Of course, the right-hand trees are wofully conventional, and yet they take their place in the picture very well; so I pass by their stilted character out of respect for the admirable way in which they are placed.



Illus. LVIII

LAKE SCENE, BY JOHN VARLEY

it is an art where the size of the work should be restricted. The medium is so delicately beautiful, that it cannot carry beyond a quite limited size. As a proof of this assertion, take the finest water-colour paintings or drawings which have been produced during the last hundred and fifty years, and it will be seen how few have been outside a limited size.

For the most part Varley kept his work to moderate dimensions. His drawings are always interesting, and can frequently be bought for a very low price. I think my purchase of a pair for sixpence each established a record. The lake scene which is here reproduced is one of these. I have found greater difficulty in getting examples of this master's work to study than either of those I have taken as my helps. I never heard that his production was limited, but think rather that his works have not been much acquired by public institutions. They are doubtless scattered widely, as his pictures are more often seen in the hands of small country dealers and in old portfolios than are those of any of his contemporaries.

CHAPTER XXV

WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS PAST AND PRESENT

John Constable

ON looking back and taking note of the men from whom I have derived great help by the study of their work, I find John Constable occupying a very high place. The manner in which he studied is clearly evidenced in work which the nation is so fortunately possessed of. His notebooks are a collection of charming pictures, many of which are suitable for increase to the largest size. The room devoted to his studies and small works at the Victoria and Albert Museum is a perfect treasure-house for the student. His tree studies in themselves are invaluable, and evidence his genius as well as his untiring energy. I have always thought his water-colour drawings the most masterly and spontaneous that exist. When you look at them carefully, it is very apparent that his whole effort was to work squarely to find expression for his feelings. Nobody was to be pleased save himself, and working for that end alone he ended by charming and convincing all. His work is remarkably different from that of his contemporaries, and yet there is no safer man than Constable upon whom to found one's style. I do not say that any individual artist should be thus taken as a model, but had I selected a model of style, Constable would certainly have been my choice. It is marvellous how out of an apparent confusion of lines and paint he evolves a choice idea.

He was a master draughtsman, as well as being most subtle in his selection of subjects. I think his little pencil drawing of a horse and cart in sunshine is a strong evidence of his power of composition. All is exactly right, in line as well as in just balance of light and shade. The force of the whole thing is amazing. I have found endless delight and advantage in these great and beautiful drawings. Every student should be familiar with them, as without doubt they are a unique expression of the way a great

man worked in the perfecting of himself. Obviously, toil was to Constable the keenest of joys and the most loving of labours. I have always felt refreshed after visiting this choice collection, and better able to face the difficulties of my work. In the use of the pencil few have shown such complete mastery. If ever a man painted in pencil it was Constable, and truly choice paintings they were. I have found this painter's water-colours scattered about England, and turning up in the most unaccountable places. Of his oil paintings I can say nothing here, except that from personal experience I have found much help in my own water-colour work from studying them. In all Constable's work there is so much colour incident, which gives to it an utter freedom from "flatness." I believe this term was his own, and it certainly is a most happy one.

A picture painted flatly is one lacking in sparkle and a constant twinkle of colour incident. In making his works scintillate with colour in sunlight as well as shadow, he never for a moment loses sight of the cardinal masses and never weakens his breadth of treatment. This principle of spacious masses of light and shadow is seen in his great landscapes, and is equally apparent in the page of a notebook with its drawing three inches by four. I so fully realize the importance of this point in picture construction that I cannot too forcibly or too frequently impress it on the student. However, the great masters loved detail; their works appeal to one at first sight by the brevity of their scheme of lighting and shadow. Therefore at the shrine of Constable let your knee be constantly bent, as the benefit derived from such devotion will have nothing but the best influence on your labours, and its character also.

John Sell Cotman

In point of distinction the work of this great artist comes before any of those great men with whom he laboured. It is astonishing, when the difficulties of his life are considered, to see the splendid record he achieved. His work as an etcher alone would have placed him high in the list of British artists. But when, in addition, it is considered how great he was both as a water-colourist and a painter, he must be conceded a unique position indeed. Great as is my admiration for the work of Cotman, I must warn the student that the study of his labours must be pursued warily. Not that he is ever faulty in his composition or drawing, but at one period of his life his colour gets very violent and overstrained.

His use of bright blues and orange-yellows, as well as other crude colours, make his drawings of this time quite harsh when compared with what may be described as his normal style.

Very fortunately for the lovers of Art, the work of Cotman is represented in most of the great public collections of Great Britain. Students can therefore seek his help by studying his drawings with comparative ease. Naturally, the greater number of his drawings and paintings have found their way to London, and are in the safe-keeping of the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum. Those in the possession of Mr. Colman of Norwich are of rare value, and should be seen if possible. I will not attempt to particularize either of those drawings which have afforded me special pleasure. My object is rather to draw attention to the class of drawing in which Cotman shines. It is when he seeks to get his story told by direct methods, and in limpid transparent washes, that he is at his best, and is, without question, the greatest master of water-colour painting.

Incidentally, I must warn students who in their wanderings through England, and especially in the eastern counties, may come across drawings by Cotman. The system upon which he taught may not be generally known. It was Cotman's plan to lend his drawings to pupils who, having copied them, were given a lesson on their effort. At one time there were about two thousand of Cotman's water-colour drawings in circulation. In this way many clever copies got scattered about the country, many of which no doubt had finishing touches by the master. It is easily conceivable that if such a drawing got into the hands of an unscrupulous person, it would be but a short step to add Cotman's signature. I feel sure this fraud has been practised, and if the name was so forged seventy or eighty years since, it would now have quite a genuine look. Like so many men of genius, Cotman had but little recognition during his life. His restrained colour and simple composition found no favour in the eyes of the general public, who in his days, as now, preferred the vulgar and noisy.

I do not generally advise the copying of water-colour paintings by students. If, however, I made any exception to this rule, it would certainly be in favour of this great artist. The ridiculous caricatures which have been constantly made of Turner's works by his admirers cannot be too severely condemned. But in copying Cotman, there is a technical simplicity in his work which might possibly be overcome, although with extreme difficulty.

ILLUSTRATION LIX

JOHN SELL COTMAN

1782–1842

THE BAGGAGE WAGGON

ILLUSTRATION LIX

The Baggage Waggon

THE brilliancy of effect in Cotman's most masterly productions arises from the directness of his method of work. The student must very carefully differentiate when seeking help from this painter, as he is not always direct but in very many cases laboured and rather theatrical. Cotman has been much written about, so there is no difficulty in finding good critical opinions on his paintings. My greatest pleasure is in those works he did in the earlier part of his life; those he accomplished later on, with their bright blues and oranges, do not appeal to me at all. In this picture everything seems good. The charmingly managed trees, the striking foreground with horseman and waggon, all help in their several parts to make up a charming picture. Note should be taken of the beauty of the left-hand tree, and the effect produced by the light stems and branches as they show up against the dark background of foliage to the right; also the manner in which the dark period runs through the picture from the bottom right-hand corner up to where it culminates in the upper dark part of the round-headed tree. Nothing is left to chance, but rather shows the most careful planning in order that the effect arrived at should be attained. The drawing of the cart and figure is perfect in its simplicity, and the shadows on them are managed with a masterly deftness. I do not know a drawing more thoroughly "Cotman" than this is, nor one in which his gentle mood is so well expressed. No discouragement should be felt if the student after many efforts fails to get such an effect, as it is a great achievement. Of the many water-colourists who have done great things, few have accomplished such simple beauty in their work as Cotman. Right in his conception, this artist in his happiest drawings carried his plan straight through to the end. Of course, I am speaking of those works in which it was possible even for Cotman so to begin and finish a picture without tripping or over-painting. Attempts may often be made, but I speak after long experience when I say that the best results are seldom attained. Happy is the artist who reaches now and again to a point where even partial satisfaction is his reward.



Illus. LIX *From the reproduction published by the Autotype Co.*

THE BAGGAGE WAGGON, BY JOHN SELL COTMAN

There is a chance of copying the great Norwich man but not the slightest of imitating the subtleties of Turner.

It is better, however, to leave copying alone, but rather, by patient study, to try and unravel the principles on which each particular man worked. I still ponder when looking at a Cotman drawing on the brilliancy of his sunshine, as well as on the depth and transparency of his shadows. Emotion is the spring from which flows Cotman's work, and it is the purest source of art endeavour. His labours were those of love, and much gladdened his otherwise anxious life. I have often felt, as I studied Cotman's work, the inspiring influence of his pure effort truthfully to express his feeling. It is so very obviously free from all that falseness which has caused some men to strive to please others rather than themselves alone. Reputation is a charming reward to gain. But the only lasting credit is that which is based on the sincere effort to work faithfully in accordance with the dictates of the emotions. And in his finest efforts this is undoubtedly what Cotman did. Few men have met with such a scanty recognition and yet seldom has honour been so fully deserved.

Francia

This early nineteenth century water-colourist has apparently not left behind him much evidence of the work he did. Yet what he painted is strong and full of a fine appreciation of composition. His colour is rich, and when his work is seen at its best it may well claim a prominent place amongst the best of those who composed the school of early water-colour painters. I have found great help from the few examples of his work that I know, and advise that his pictures should be carefully studied when opportunities occur for doing so. Francia is certainly a most accomplished craftsman, and for this quality alone his work should be known.

Richard Parkes Bonington

In a way as emotional as any of his forerunners or contemporaries, Richard Parkes Bonington stands out as a rare executant of detail and painter of incident. It is wonderful when his work is looked at to believe in the shortness of his life. The toil of his days must have been unceasing, in order to account for the number of works which stand to the credit of his genius.

The great brilliancy of his technique gives to his work more the quality of an oil painting than that of water-colour. Peter de Wint comes near him in some of his best and strongest paintings, but even he seldom does so. It is many years since I first saw Bonington's paintings. I believe they were those in the Wallace Collection when it was housed at the Bethnal Green Museum in 1872. Nothing amongst the masterpieces there collected together gave me greater joy. It must be remembered that I was very young, and looked out keenly for water-colour work wherever it was to be seen. A rare feeling for a bouquet of colour always seems to have stirred Bonington's imagination, whether he painted in oil or water-colours. I find also, in studying his work, an extraordinary refinement of feeling in many of his landscapes, which has been of the greatest help.

Samuel Prout

This artist's work is as a rule far too conventional to be held up to the student for study without a note of warning being first sounded. His use of the reed pen, whilst full of charm, is apt to lead astray, unless much reserve is exercised. The strong outline obtained by this reed pen process always lacks the sensitiveness which should exist in a painting. The force of his shadows is too brutally simple, although without doubt most effective. It is this very forcing of sunlight and shadow which the student is likely to find attractive and good to imitate. I have found much in Prout's work to help me, and in years gone by have even ventured on the reed pen trick. His influence was, however, short-lived, and I remained contented with the study of those drawings which he produced without the help of his favourite convention.

His figure groups are interesting in a way, but are not of an order to be seriously considered. The student must discriminate when looking at this artist's work, and doing so will find much that is very beautiful and masterly. Here was a man who evidently considered that water colours could successfully compete with oil painting in the size of works attempted. I have in my mind two huge shipwrecks which I came across in a country house. The incident depicted in these great efforts is quite amazing, and the labour is beyond praise. But the whole thing is disappointing in the extreme, and goes to prove how futile the toil is

ILLUSTRATION LX

François Louis Thomas Francia

1772–1839

MOOR AND WINDMILL

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LX

Moor and Windmill

FRANCIA is a little-known artist in spite of his great qualities. This is accounted for by the fact that so few of his works are to be seen in public galleries. Whether he was a scanty producer, or if his paintings are resting quietly hidden away in private collections, I do not know. Certain it is, that after thirty years of searching for works by men of the old school I have succeeded in unearthing only a very, very few. Possibly I may have missed meeting with the paintings of this water-colourist, and others may have been more fortunate. In spite of the fact that he worked at the time when de Wint and Cotman were in their zenith, his paintings if set side by side with these two men or any of their contemporaries would not have suffered by comparison. This is a great tribute, and is intended as such. The drawing here reproduced is very fine, and responds by its quality to the highest demands of the critic. The whole of it is full of thoughtful consideration, and the result is a fine achievement. The skyline, emphasized by a streak of fading light, is in its turn fondly embraced by the bright patch in the water. In the middle distance the lightened ground on which the sheep are seen is a point of much delicacy of handling, as also is the bit of far distant downs to the left and the patch of shadowed land beneath it. Note the spot of lit-up water to the left and just above the group of near rushes, and it will clearly appear how everything that is introduced to fill up the work with profound interest is absolutely indispensable. The foreground is simple but finely suggested, and is judiciously deepened in tone as the light spot of water is reached. The sky is very beautiful, but so obvious in its scheme that I make no remarks on it. As to the colours used, they seem to be the limited variety with which the old artists were content, and the effect on this gloomy storm-swept downland is simply perfect.



Illus. LX

MOOR AND WINDMILL, BY F. L. T. FRANCIA

when an attempt is made to do a water-colour drawing on such a scale.

The public galleries are rich in examples of Prout's work, and there are few collections of the works of the old English masters of our medium where he is not represented. It is the directness of Prout which has always attracted me, and it is this great quality that I point out as very worthy of study. His shadows are always transparent, and never show any muddling in their management. I have also always been impressed with his sense of composition and selection of subject. Although I refer to this artist as one from whom help may be got by the study of his work for certain qualities, it must not be thought that I place him on the same plane as Girtin, Cotman, or de Wint.

David Cox

Admirable as the work of David Cox was, it must, in common with Prout and other men of the first half of the nineteenth century, be taken with reserve. I admire much of his painting, seeing in it a rare expression of the beauties of English landscape. I am giving my own impressions of the work of the men from whom I have sought help. I am also stating clearly where I have found their work lacking. In Cox I discern very clearly a desire to make up his pictures in a mechanical way, to give them a grand importance.

A young student may easily be led astray by such a demonstration of mere skill. There is a drawing of an old water mill at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and another, the well-known "Challenge," in the same museum. In both of these splendid pictures David Cox spoke from his heart in the most full and emotional manner, beyond which no artist can go. Follow his work and select paintings of the same type, and he is a help and encouragement fitted to rank with the best. It is when he seeks to go beyond this, and to produce those great and elaborated exhibition works, that his mission to the student ends. I object to this phase of his art, as the beginning of that class of work in water-colours which for more than fifty years crowded the walls of our great exhibitions and made them the laughing-stock of all those who possessed that rare quality, the "seeing eye." The beauty of those direct drawings which Cox produced in such numbers is indeed such, that to see them is to love them. His

figure drawings again, many of which are studies for his large pictures, are masterpieces of simplicity and beauty. They are to be seen in many places.

The Print Room at the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Birmingham, and other of the great cities of Great Britain, are rich in the works of David Cox. I hope that one day the framed works of this great artist will be removed from their hideous gold mounts and shown, to their great advantage, in the white ones which are the true surround of a water-colour drawing.

To attempt to select works of Art would not be of practical advantage. Rather let the student seek them out, and carefully detach those in which Cox sought to express his conceptions emotionally.

ILLUSTRATION LXI

DAVID COX

1783–1859

WATER MILL, NORTH WALES

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LXI

WATER MILL, NORTH WALES

DAVID COX was not one of the truly great, in the group of water-colour painters of whom Girtin, Cotman, and de Wint were such brilliant examples. He was a man who very naturally sought to become independent, and to build up a fortune suited to his social position, and in my opinion fell into a method of work that induced him to make much of his painting agreeable to the buying public, instead of seeking to satisfy his own aspirations and emotions alone, and letting all else follow if it would. Possessing a rare capacity in the choice of a subject, he often rendered them very "prettily," in this way securing a ready sale but risking a grand reputation. I am quite aware that a painting by Cox has realized some thousands of guineas; but that was forty years ago, and the critical public had not awakened to the fact that the greatest water-colourist was Thomas Girtin. Much of David Cox's work was very sloppy, and, again, much of it was far larger in actual measurement than a water-colour should be painted. And now having warned the student of water-colours as to those points in which this artist failed, I will say something on the admirable work he achieved. A great love of English landscape led him to paint his own land, rendering the subjects he chose with great fidelity. The picture here given has been, and is, a great favourite of mine, from which I have got much encouragement. Let the student note how strong and full of masterly quality the central period is: the lit-up house, and the strong line of trees running from right to left, and then carrying on over the bit of bridge, house, gable, and roof, form a most forcible scheme of light and shade. The right-hand stump comes in well; whilst being a bit too conventional, it answers the double purpose of giving a point of interest in the otherwise vacant right of the picture, and breaking the skyline of hills as well. The fairly light sky is beautifully complemented by the right-hand foreground and reflections of light-houses in the water. I cannot begin to speculate as to the colours Cox used in painting this beautiful picture, but I rather think that he used, when painting, every colour he could get hold of. In leaving David Cox, I must warn the student to select with care what pictures to study, as much that he produced will do the learner more harm than good.



Illus. LXI

THE WATER MILL, NORTH WALES, BY DAVID COX

CHAPTER XXVI

OTHER ARTISTS

IT has always been a pleasant reflection to me to know that through all that dreary period in which water-colour painting languished and almost expired, men existed and worked who still thought correctly of the method in which a water-colour drawing should be executed. Callow was working when the revival began, and he was working before David Cox painted his last picture. Much of the work of R. P. Leitch was very admirable, and the elder Richardson, in his best work, was most candidly expressive of water-colour painting in its purity. Both these men afforded me much assistance from the study of their work when I was a mere boy, and in looking back I do not think that the time I worked at copying their drawings was ill-spent.

Needham was another man whose works I copied with great pleasure. I remember once copying some willow trees by this artist, and being puzzled about the silvery grey on the lit-up part of the foliage, I was told by the artist colourman from whom I used to borrow the pictures that it was made with sepia and indigo. My informant told me that he had this tip from Needham himself.

In certain particulars, as soon as the middle of the nineteenth century was passed, Art matters began quickly to look more hopeful. A small band of artists, to whom a later generation has given well-earned honour, were working as book illustrators. I refer to these men, as most of them worked in water-colours as well as black and white. Houghton, Pinwell, Fred Walker, Watson, Small, were all prominent members of that small body of artists whose work was the salt of that period which came a generation before the so-called Impressionists in France, and then the New English Art Club in England reanimated the dry bones of modern Art. Those men I have just mentioned were not, in the strictest sense of the term, water-colour painters. Their work in particular was that of book illustrating, and they

painted more or less as an addition to their regular work. Naturally the stiff formal method in vogue at that time was the one in which they expressed themselves when working in water-colours.

Nothing could have been more beautiful than what they did, and nothing could have kept Art alive so vigorously. Great artists as they were, their work was not strictly that of water-colour painters. I admire them beyond words, but I never studied their paintings to help me on with my own. To tell completely of the way I have striven during my life to improve my knowledge as a water-colour painter, I have been obliged to note the joy the work of these men has given me. Many admirable artists I have passed by whose efforts gladdened this time, my reason for this being that I never came across them when I was labouring in my early years. Latterly much has come to my knowledge about the workers of this Mid-Victorian time, but this does not come within the scope of my subject. Arthur Melville, I regret to say, has not been at all well known to me, but so far as I have seen his work it appeals to me most thoroughly. Let the student do as I am doing, and take every opportunity to see his paintings.

The Present Generation

Again I must remind the student that I write about the men whose works I have seen and studied. Although Brabazon worked well back into the past century, it was only when he began to exhibit at the New English Art Club that I knew his paintings. Certainly his work is not to be imitated by the student. Full of sunlight and colour, fine in composition, he is an artist standing alone in his originality. I think of all the miserable things in the way of water-colour paintings I have ever seen have been the vile imitations of Brabazon. From his work I have got many a fine tonic for the emotions, and such help is of the best. He was a great student of Turner, and is a striking example of how a man may be inspired by another without in the slightest degree becoming a copyist. Few of the revival painters shine brighter than does Brabazon.

Although Philip Wilson Steer is particularly a painter, the work he has done in waterc-olours shows him possessed of a genius for that medium. Whenever his drawings are to be seen, the student should avail himself of the opportunity of studying them. They are always direct and full of masterly quality in their composition,

ILLUSTRATION LXII

EDWARD EDWARDS

1738–1806

DURHAM CATHEDRAL

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LXII

Durham Cathedral

THIS drawing was selected as of interest to the student because of its simple and forcible method, especially in the treatment of the cathedral, and other buildings. I do not care much for the pen-work of the trees, as they rather overdo, in the treatment of the foliage, the conventions in vogue when this drawing was made. Even in regard to this moot point, however, the final effect obtained is very good; and, as I have often remarked, it is the final result that counts, although it is always desirable to begin well. If this drawing is well studied by a student before his next architecture composition is attempted, it will be found that a most useful fund of knowledge has been obtained. It should be borne in mind that a day for a similar effort must be bright and sunny, so that the shadow masses may appear clear and distinct. The tree branch, which is shown strongly drawn across the right-hand corner, is very happily placed. I have seen many drawings of Durham from this point, but I certainly think this is one of the best—it is so very spontaneous and unconventional even in its old-fashioned conventionality. I would never advise a student to try and tackle Durham Cathedral until he feels very sure-footed. It has been done so well by John Sell Cotman, and other great painters, that it might well be left alone, at least until it is felt that an effort must be made to show it in a new light. Durham in a general way is a fine place for a painting tour; so even if the cathedral is not attempted, there are many other subjects in the city and neighbourhood. When studying this drawing, it should be noted with what subtlety the values of buildings are treated, as the work recedes from the right-hand corner to the distant houses, disappearing behind the trees. In spite of its apparent simplicity, the picture was executed with the greatest care, and every attention given to it, in order that a happy result might be obtained.



Illus. LXII

Durham Cathedral, by Edward Edwards

ILLUSTRATION LXIII

D. Y. Cameron

KINFAUNS

ILLUSTRATION LXIII

Kinfauns

THIS very beautiful water-colour is in my possession, and from the study of it I have derived much pleasure. The effect of passing clouds, the lit-up cliffs, and the distant reaches of the loch, with the delicately executed details, all serve to add charm to the many other attractions of the picture. The simple management of the foreground does not in any way distract the attention from the middle distance, in which is stored the soul of the picture. Although the foreground is unobtrusive, yet it is full of suggestion and beauty: in it the work of the past master speaks forcibly.



Illus. LXIII

KINFAUNS, BY D. Y. CAMERON, R.A.

ILLUSTRATION LXIV

David Muirhead

LANDSCAPE WITH MILL

ILLUSTRATION LXIV

Landscape with Mill

THE water colours of David Muirhead are always masterly in composition, and invariably of a serene beauty. Let the student avail himself of every opportunity of seeing and studying this artist's work, as they are ever a source of pleasure to the observer, and of the greatest advantage to the craftsman who may be seeking inspiration. I have said above that Muirhead's water-colours are masterly, but from this statement it must not be inferred that his paintings are not of equality with his drawings: he is a strong man, whichever medium he employs. Take note of this sky, and its splendid simplicity; yet it is full of shimmering light, and is the result of intense labour and thought, although the toil is hidden in the simple beauty obtained. In the foreground the reproduction scarcely does justice to the picture of this quiet east coast village and mill. In the water-colour itself all is well, but photography has not picked up quite correctly the quality of the near objects. However, it is sufficiently well reproduced to support the perfectly rendered sky, and skyline of the mill, houses, and low-lying hills to the right, and mass of dark trees on the left.



Illus. LXIV

LANDSCAPE WITH MILL, BY DAVID MUIRHEAD

colour, and drawing. For the most part they are hidden away in private collections; soon I hope the public galleries of the country will see fit to secure examples of his works in water-colours.

The student who is studying in water-colours should not only seize opportunities of seeing the works of the past masters, but also those of the present time. I know, as do all those interested in the public acquiring of works of art, how public funds are administered. Otherwise a national fund for the buying of paintings and drawings might be of advantage; but under present conditions, alas, no!—I can imagine the establishing of such a National Fund, and the folks the Government would call to their aid to spend it. There would, of course, be the Royal Academy, the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, the R.W.S., and the R.B.A., with, perhaps, the R.P.E. to assist in buying prints.

The New English Art Club and the International Society of Painters, as well as all independent workers, would be carefully excluded. Thus we should be no better off, in which case a National Fund had better not be prayed for.

I should like to see the works in water-colours of David Muirhead find a prominent place in the national collections. This is another painter whose genius finds expression in water-colour works of the greatest beauty and in rare style. I have found the greatest help in my own work by studying his masterly productions. Painting with extreme refinement, a close knowledge of his sentiments as expressed in his work should be of the greatest help to the student. There is, again, another artist whose works in water-colours, although rarely seen, have always appealed to me most forcibly. I refer to James Pryde. His drawings, although much helped by the use of chinese white, are certainly of the type to be included amongst the work I am considering. However small they may be in actual measurement, the subject is always large and stately. And beyond such qualities his work is ever expressive of some fine idea. And without such a quality in a picture it is a tame thing indeed. I have a few of Pryde's water-colours, and much regret that his work in this direction has been so limited. One of his pictures is here reproduced, and is enough to show the character of his work. I cannot too strongly urge the student to see this artist's pictures whenever an opportunity occurs for doing so. They stand altogether apart from the ordinary, and are always full of poetic thought. Amidst much that is excellent in modern work, it is this kind of painting that

is rarely seen. The genius is seldom found, and to me Pryde is of this unusual cult.

I will now speak about the work of an artist from whom I have had much help. I refer to that admirable man, Harpignies. I have a charcoal drawing in my possession; it is an interesting example of his style. Although this picture is rather classical, it has a fine quality in its composition. I have seen a fair number of works by Harpignies, and have always felt cheered after looking at them. In England they are scattered about in the hands of dealers, and will no doubt become well-known in time. This artist is, I believe, the last survivor of the Brabazon school, having outlived Corot and his contemporaries. There is a charming simplicity in his outlook, as he always seemed contented to get his inspirations from the most simple subjects and clothe them with his emotional quality. In certain ways he has always appealed to me very strongly. In a gathering together of the best work of the last fifty years his original personality would be strongly felt. His strivings are not calculated to arrest attention by their originality, so much as by their masterly management of a simple theme. Certainly in his work "simplicity is the soul of wit," and after all this is the vital spark of genius.

All the artists upon whose productions my remarks have been made are those whose works I have studied. Others have attracted me by the quality of their painting, which doubtless the student will discover and make his own selection. My object has been, so far as I have gone, to trace my working life and point to those from whose paintings I have derived help and inspiration.

I have not yet referred to a flower painter, although there are several of great ability working at the present time.

To me there is no flower painter in water-colours possessed of greater genius for her subject than Miss Ursula Tyrwhitt. Although she is a sparing producer of work which she thinks fit to show publicly, enough has been seen to establish her reputation for originality and quality. There is none of the feeble prettiness which crowds the walls of the great public exhibitions. Instead of this, there is apparent in her work the seriousness of a mind striving to express choice ideas. Very little is known by the public generally of this artist, but if she continues to express her feelings in the way she has begun I believe that her future is assured.

It is rather surprising to find so able an artist caring to practise

ILLUSTRATION LXV

James Pryde

THE CUSTOMS HOUSE, VENICE

ILLUSTRATION LXV

The Customs House, Venice

IN the case of the illustration of this master, I can only give expression to my opinion, that for stately and poetic conception he stands alone in the school of British water-colour painters; no one approaches him. I hope that a share of the pleasure and encouragement that I have derived from this artist's work may be experienced by the student. I must add, however, that Pryde works in water-colours, incidentally to his labours as a painter in oil.



Illus. LXV

THE CUSTOMS HOUSE, VENICE, BY JAMES PRYDE

ILLUSTRATION LXVI

A. A. McEvoy

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

ILLUSTRATION LXVI

The Haunted House

MR. A. A. McEVOY, whose reputation as a portrait painter is well known, is also distinguished as a water-colourist. He imparts a rare quality of poetic charm to all he paints and draws, in addition to which he is an indefatigable worker. With regard to his portraits, no words of mine can add to the estimation in which the artistic profession and the critical world hold them, so I will content myself by expressing my unqualified admiration for their great qualities. This picture well demonstrates the poetic character referred to. Subdued in tone and perfect in its composition and the distribution of lights, the whole makes up a picture full of charm and interest. I strongly recommend the student to take every opportunity of studying this artist's work.



Illus. LXVI

THE HAUNTED HOUSE, BY A. A. McEVOY

flower painting, seeing to what a low ebb it has fallen. Fortunately, however, there are still a few painters who practise this art in a manner that is worthy of a thing so beautiful. I think there are few more pitiful displays than are found in the periodical exhibitions of flower gardens. Unfortunately, means are found to get such travesties on Art well received, and so the public is misled, instead of being guided by such critical utterances. I have told of the help which I have derived from the study of the works of the painters of the past and the present. To avoid the influence of the work of the ignorant in Art is a thing of great importance. I owe my fortune in this particular to the accident of having come under the guidance of the old water-colourists whilst I was still very young. I had no one to guide me as to what or whom to study.

It is to help the student in what to avoid that I give the following advice. Let the student avoid entirely for a time visiting exhibitions of modern work. Instead, let the whole of his time that he can devote to picture seeing be spent in the study of those of established reputation. It is almost as important to avoid looking at bad pictures as it is to study those that are good. The opinion of the inexperienced is easily influenced, hence the necessity of devoting oneself at all times to the finest of Art works possible. The sentiments on matters relating to Art which are openly expressed are often bad in the extreme, and against these I would warn the student.

CHAPTER XXVII

PICTURES TO BE STUDIED AND THOSE TO BE AVOIDED

I HAVE heard the opinion given by a student about to leave the school where he had studied for several years, that his object in the practice of painting would be to find out the class of work which pleased the public, and proceed to do it. This man has been doing so-called works of art which go fully to justify such a decision. Again, and this only a short time since, an artist told me that he had learned the class of work which pleased his buyers and produced pictures accordingly. I cannot understand the condition of a man's mind who would hold such opinions. The student should begin early to learn that he must be absolutely true to himself. He may follow a certain school, or a single artist. Such devotion must have in view, however, the eventual assertion of the individual mind. The mere copying of the work of a man, however great, leads to little. The great men who are painting at the present time belong to no one particular institution, and to no special school of thought. They are hidden away for the most part, to be tardily recognized during their lifetime or, more likely, when they have gone hence.

I think that, speaking generally, the best contemporary art is to be seen at the so-called " one man " shows. In such exhibitions there is necessarily a limited number of works; thus they can be looked at without weariness. Nearly all the most prominent men exhibit their work periodically in this way. I can look back over the past fifteen years and call to mind nearly every artist of eminence being shown in such a manner.

It is hard for any save a student to find continued interest in a room where only one man is represented ; but yet, in face of this drawback, it is, I am sure, a good plan. There are, again, small exhibitions where the works of a few men are gathered together. This gives an interesting relief from one class of picture to another,

ILLUSTRATION LXVII

CORNELIUS VARLEY

1781–1873

HARLECH CASTLE, NORTH WALES

Victoria and Albert Museum

ILLUSTRATION LXVII

Harlech Castle

THE student should look carefully at this illustration, and I sincerely hope that the same amount of satisfaction that I have derived from it may be his also. I do not care to compare the works of past and present artists, but in this instance I am forcibly reminded of certain pictures by P. Wilson Steer. Both these men arrive at the most charming results by the simplest methods, and both are great. Let the student trace the lit-up road as its quality is carried on in the patch of right-hand water to be again lifted to the sea or lake past the castle, finding, finally, its resting-place in the quiet sky. I have tried to express in words the idea of complement, tracing the lights of the picture as it receded; but this would have been faulty had it not been for the light on the left-hand hill, and again on the castle—this is composition. How masterly is the placing of the tall tree and the position occupied by the figures. Cornelius Varley was a truly charming painter, and although not ranking with the greatest, was one of those who helped to make the school of early English water-colour so truly a national one.



Illus. LXVII

Harlech Castle, North Wales, by Cornelius Varley

without the lassitude attendant on visiting a large exhibition. It is very difficult to keep the mind alert, when you are looking with attention at many pictures. The more the mind is fixed with keenness on a picture, the sooner it tires, and becomes incapable of further effort in this direction.

The student should never attempt to look at more than a few works of art one after the other. The advantage gained by looking with great attention at a few pictures is far greater than by wearily going through a great number, however beautiful they may all be. I make it a rule, when visiting the Print Room or the Victoria and Albert Museum, to be contented with looking at quite a few, very often not more than ten or twelve. By this means the mind can fully absorb all that is studied, without fear of confusion. It is a useful method to write a small digest of the pictures looked at, after making such a visit. This will not only impress the works seen on the mind, but help also to strengthen the points which have chiefly attracted attention.

It is when studying works in this way that I see no reason why parts of pictures should not be copied in order to help the mind fully to grasp certain special points. This is very different from making complete copies of works. Such a thing I have always felt to be a deadly dull entertainment. I have found it a great help in my work to correspond with brother students and artists on Art matters. I do not mean so much on matters relating to theories of Art, as on points and questions of pictures seen, or even heard of. By this means I have constantly been made aware of the home of treasures which might otherwise not have come to my notice. It seems, also, to be a rational thing to make letter writing of real interest, instead of merely being the medium for discussing trivial subjects. I have always sought to make everything in my life minister in some way to the furtherance of my work. This scheme has added much joy to my life, and I should like others as well to find pleasure in such a plan.

Amongst other ways of strengthening a knowledge of Art, the student should begin early to collect pictures. When means do not allow of the buying of original works, the next best thing is to get reproductions. In water-colour paintings this is difficult, as colour prints are usually so horribly bad. However, certain masters reproduce fairly well, notably Sandby, Girtin, and Cotman. Prints after Peter de Wint are usually worthless, as his colour masses, especially in the dark shadows, are quite impossible

to reproduce well. Old prints after the Dutch, Italian, and French masters, in line engraving, can be picked up for a trifle in old print or book shops. I have collected a great number of these and found them most interesting to study. The value of such prints as a help to a knowledge of composition I have already mentioned.

I have for several years been making a small collection of water-colour paintings and drawings by modern men. It is not an expensive taste, as the leading artists are not getting high prices for their work. A good figure has to be paid for a representative Brabazon, and of course those by John Sargent are costly. Otherwise it is the work by those whom the public consider the leaders of Art which obtain large sums.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the leading Art critics advise well on the question of whose pictures to buy. I have often been told, when discussing the question of the merit or demerit of works of art, that what is good or bad is a question of fashion. Such a statement is a great error, as subjected to the highest critical opinion a picture is good or bad and must ever remain so.

When Peter de Wint was getting fair professional prices for his pictures, John S. Cotman had to see his go for a few shillings. Yet they were both great men, and of the latter Turner had the highest opinion. If the public choose to give high prices for pictures because they are from the walls of our fashionable institutions, it is no criterion of their merit. The public is lacking in taste to a pitiable extent, yet they will buy what appeals to them rather than be guided by sound critical advice. I have seen tens of thousands spent on extraordinarily bad pictures, when their only recommendation has been that they have hung on the walls of great exhibitions. Truly, they may have been well spoken of by the Press; but then, who were the critics? I have also seen exhibitions where the criticisms have been praise of the faintest kind, and yet the public, liking the stuff, have bought freely and at high prices. I contend that the best critics have for many years advised the public well in matters of Art generally. I also know that much has been said in the Press which, if subjected to the ordeal of high opinion, would be condemned.

I know the public are thus in a difficult position. They must, however, read such utterances with care, being sure that a faint praise is in reality a virtual condemnation. From my experience

I advise the student, knowing that it is as necessary to be warned what pictures to avoid looking at as it is to point out those which it is advisable to study. Such advice is given in the same way as I have pointed out the colours to use or the method in which they should be applied. It is all part and parcel of the work of my life, and is intended as a helping hand to the learner. I must say, before concluding this chapter, that public taste in England is far better than it was. Not only do the thoughtful and original artists find greater patronage, but the great exhibitions, where much that is vulgar is shown, are not visited and bought from so freely as in years gone by. I feel this to be a good sign, as it shows plainly that things are moving in the right direction.

CHAPTER XXVIII

EMOTION IN ART

I SAY very emphatically that emotion is the soul of Art. It is the instinct in the human being which prompts the seeking of the beautiful in nature. From the lovely thing thus sought for it is but a short step to attempt to give it a tangible form when found. Thus the musical soul seeks to express itself in song and the artistic in painting. There is no telling how such an instinct is first awakened. The French child Lulli, when a little scullion, found delight in tapping on stewpans of various sizes and tones, which were the only means he had by which to express his musical feelings. Lulli became one of the greatest musicians of his age, and when he died it was recorded on his tomb that " all knew that Death was blind, but in striking down Lulli he has discovered himself to be deaf also." Equally surprising were the childish efforts of Benjamin West, who painted his infant sister in her cradle with a brush made from the hairs of a cat's tail. These are crude examples of Art instinct; yet they prove that the heavenly thing, if possessed, must find a vent in spite of all difficulties.

All technical knowledge is but the A B C which provides the means of expression. And herein lies the heavy responsibility of those who educate. A too rigid system, by which all are forced into the same groove, can only end in a formality of expression and the killing of originality. Methods can be taught, all that is worthy in the past can be pointed to as fit for emulation; but the story the artist has to tell is his own, and must be told in his own way. I used to read, when a boy, handbooks written for the student seeking information in Art matters. One such book treated of the subject of water-colour painting. Even in those early days I felt that rules could not be laid down for the painting of a picture. I felt very unhappy that I could not follow the advice given, and finally gave up handbook studying. I was quite sorrowful, as I felt that it was my lack of Art instinct

which prevented me taking full advantage of the plans laid down.

My next plan was to borrow water-colour paintings from artist colourmen. As the works obtained in this way were not, however, by men distinguished by the emotional quality of their work, this method was also abandoned. It was a little later that I began to take every opportunity to work from nature. My studio has been for many years in the open air, where I find Nature ever ready to stir the emotions with her beauty. The work I have done under cover has been infinitely small. The studio is a very right and proper workshop, but the landscape painter must be well equipped with knowledge gained direct from nature before he begins to paint from memory alone. I still do not want a studio, as it might tempt me to work less from nature. At present I can do any memory work in a room suitably lighted. The student must not conclude from my remarks that work which is an immediate response to the emotions need be hasty, as this is not the case. Can anything be imagined more delicate and beautiful than many of the intricate works of Girtin, Cotman, or Turner, and yet, laboured as they are, their emotional qualities cannot be doubted.

Nothing can awake these feelings of emotion in the mind save an intimate and constant acquaintance with Nature in all her varying moods. I cannot see how it is possible that a really devoted lover of Nature could produce the many hard and mechanical things which are shown in the great exhibitions and called pictures. Devotion to his Art must be the student's watchword if he is to gain that knowledge of it which will enable him to do great works. I have seen so much playing at drawing and painting that I cannot speak too strongly respecting the absolute necessity for concentration. Art is such a grand field of labour that its practitioners must give it whole-hearted service, as nothing short of this will do. No honours must be counted on, as they seldom come to the whole-hearted worker, and reward, even to the great, seldom comes.

Living prices are usually paid for an artist's work after he has passed away and cannot benefit by them. I have often thought that emotion, which should be the first element in a work of art, is absent, for various reasons. If the artist is intent too eagerly on money making, he is running great risks of killing this great quality. If, again, he is seeking the applause of the public instead

of the approval of his own judgment, his emotions must be curbed in order to bring them in line with what is bad. For it can be safely affirmed that the general modern sentiment in Art matters is bad. Balanced opinion it cannot be called, as it is only the highly cultured few who possess such a faculty.

During the two generations which immediately preceded what can be very correctly called the modern Art revival work which was of an emotional type had practically ceased to exist. It is little wonder that the public, brought up to look upon such productions as works of art, should have lost all appreciation of what the qualities of a good picture should be. Such stuff, being the labour of those in whom emotion was a dead letter, failed to stir such a feeling in others. I feel no doubt that much of the dullness evident in the pictures which were painted during the thirty or forty years after the Great Exhibition of 1851 owe their bad quality to the ignorance of the public. As I have before remarked, the public, who had plenty of money during these years, demanded a certain quality in the pictures they bought. Unfortunately, the artists of that age appeared willing to paint to order. Evidence of great labour satisfied the public that they were getting a fair return for their money. The birds'-nests and eggs on a bit of primrose bank were as utterly devoid of emotion as they well could be. The equally laboured works of still life objects, by the seventeenth century Dutch master, were full of emotion, either in their lighting, colour, or design. A most elaborate utterance may be a fine thing if it is the outcome of a fine emotional idea. I wish to impress on the student that ideas are the great things in Art, without which pictures are surely dull demonstrations of technical skill. This thing will live and that one die, their respective fates depending on possessing or lacking that emotional quality which is the soul of Art.

I do not think that anything in painting awoke my inquiry so early as that which suggested to me the necessity of a picture being something more than a mere copy from nature. The prettiest of Surrey cottages may be exactly copied, with the most fascinating of tortoiseshell cats playing on the bricks in front of it, and yet a picture has not been produced, although a very high price may have been paid for cottage and cat. The mind can alone dictate to the hand the painting of a picture. Nature and its contemplation awake the mind to make an effort to record a thing of beauty. The result is no mere copy from nature, but a

product of the human mind, which is the highest thing in creation. And this is Art. A student should work to the highest ideals, and with complete honesty of purpose, or the result of his efforts cannot be satisfactory. As I have pointed out before, honesty in Art is a very simple thing. Work to satisfy your Art instincts, and let the demands of an ignorant public " go hang ! "

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